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PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Overview of national reports*

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is a synthesis of 72 national and 2 subregional reports analysed by the Conference secretariat reflecting the main findings and trends. Unfortunately not all reports have been received; nor has the secretariat been able to analyse fully all the late reports, owing to time constraints. Further analysis and processing of data and follow-up action will have to be done over months and perhaps years to come.

2. Only 15 reports were received by the end of July 1991, the official deadline, and by mid-November, the extended deadline and cut-off date for the synthesis report, 72 reports had been received. The analysed reports total some 11,000 pages (without annexes), with approximately two thirds in English and one third in other languages (French 2,000 and Spanish 1,000 pages).

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* The attachments to the present report are available in the language of submission only.

Forty-two reports were presented to the secretariat in English, 9 in another language with an English translation, 11 in French and 5 in Spanish (see attachment 1). A handful of countries have withdrawn their reports for the purpose of updating and revising them.

3. Unfortunately a large number of important countries, in terms of their size, population and economy, had not completed their reports at the time this synthesis was prepared. Thus countries with an estimated population of some 2.25 billion people (or roughly half of the earth's population) have not been covered.

Guidelines

4. At the first session of the Preparatory Committee, held at Nairobi, the Committee established suggested guidelines as reflected in document A/CONF.151/PC/8 and Add.1. The guidelines proposed that the national reports address, inter alia, development trends and environmental impacts, response to environment/development issues, procedures for preparing reports and the anticipated results of the Conference.

Secretariat analysis procedure

5. In its analysis of the reports the secretariat has tried to address those main elements suggested in the guidelines. The secretariat has to the extent possible analysed the reports in chronological order giving preference to final reports with diskette versions. Lack of diskette versions of reports has slowed the review process considerably. As part of the analysis process, brief five-to-seven-page "contents reviews" have been prepared for some 40 countries. The same reports have also been entered on the secretariat computerized database. The remaining reports have been analysed and indexed manually in preparation for this synthesis. The intention of the secretariat is to prepare contents reviews of as many reports as possible. The full unaltered reports will also be stored on a database, which will facilitate retrieval of information from the reports for future follow-up action, research, etc. Only reports submitted in a usable diskette format have been entered on the database. About half of reports have to date been treated in this way. The "contents reviews" are not to be taken as official secretariat documents but merely as short summaries of the main points in the reports concerned. No doubt there can be different interpretations but this is at the same time also a reflection on how a report can be understood by a reader, perhaps with less in-depth knowledge of the country concerned than their report writers. The "contents reviews" have been compiled together in a "quick-reference compendium" which could be made available to interested parties and the public at large. Samples will be available at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee.

6. The reports have been analysed principally by a team of professionals hired for this purpose, under funding provided by the Government of Finland to cover the reports from least developed countries, supplemented by secretariat funding. The same funds have also been used for securing the necessary

equipment to carry out this analysis. Reports have also been analysed by other secretariat staff and experts.

UNCED Agenda 21 Information System

7. The retrieval system used by the secretariat is CDS/ISIS (Computerized Documentation System/Integrated Set of Information Systems). The national reports system is envisaged as a part of the larger Agenda 21 information support system (AGIS). The main descriptors used in coding the reports can be found in attachment 2. These descriptors are the result of in-house standardization of the reports to facilitate analysis and other use of the material therein. The contents of the reports have not been changed. The retrieval system, once fully operational will, however, permit searches of the database by whatever word or words needed, thus allowing for very specific research work.

II. MAIN FINDINGS

8. The main findings of the reports are summarized below and indicate not only global and regional priorities emerging from the reports but also sectoral and cross-cutting issues as they emerge. These may also be described separately in other documents presented to the Preparatory Committee. The findings and figures in this report are indicative of an issue of concern raised by the countries involved. It has not been possible at this stage, because of the unevenness of the data in the reports, to introduce meaningful qualitative global or even regional data. This area needs to be explored further.

III. ANTICIPATED RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE

9. The guidelines suggested that reports specifically address the subject of expectations from the Conference; at least 37 reports out of 72 responded to this under a separate heading or as a specific item. But almost half of the reports made no special reference to expectations from the Conference. Often the expectations are included in the text in different parts of the reports, hence making the analysis time consuming. This chapter often also overlaps with another suggested chapter in the Guidelines labelled "Recommendations and priorities on environment and development" dealt with later in this document.

10. Of the countries that responded under this heading, two thirds stressed the need for commitment regarding additional funding, and more than half suggested access to environmentally sound technology under favourable conditions, or free access to it, to enhance capacity-building. Approximately one third specifically addressed the Earth Charter, the various conventions and agreements and stated specifically that Agenda 21 should be action-oriented. These figures are certainly higher when one includes the more detailed recommendations in other parts of the reports.

11. Developing countries generally expect genuine commitment or proof by the more developed countries that they are prepared to make changes in the world economy and to provide access to new and additional funding, appropriate technology and to assist with capacity-building. These same countries also see the Earth Summit as a forum for the international community to make concrete decisions regarding our common global concerns. More than a quarter of the developing country reports specifically expressed the wish for a stronger multilateral United Nations system to assist in this process. The necessity for improved regional cooperation was also often stressed, and a number of general statements were made about global commitments and the need to cooperate. Other topics mentioned under this heading include the need to address the debt problem, poverty, natural disaster prevention and fair trade.

12. The references to a strengthened United Nations system usually mention the need for closer cooperation between UNEP and UNDP. They also cover the need to integrate bilateral programmes with multilateral ones. Adequate follow-up to the Conference is also recommended.

13. The analysed reports of industrialized countries, which also happen to be major aid donors, support the general expectations of developing countries by stating that the Earth Summit should reach specific and concrete decisions regarding funding, technology issues and capacity-building leading to an action-oriented Agenda 21 programme. A number of developing country reports specifically refer to the Conference process as a way of learning from other developing countries and thus gaining experience. Likewise they are also willing to share their knowledge and experiences. The country-specific issues and problems are dealt with separately under other headings in this report.

14. Regarding regional cooperation, a number of countries with common environmental concerns (e.g. river-basin countries, desert countries, small island States and countries experiencing transboundary pollution) have expressed the need for stronger regional cooperation.

IV. THE NATIONAL REPORT DRAFTING PROCESS

15. This section is elaborated in somewhat greater detail than expected since a large number of Governments in presenting their reports to the secretariat have specifically commented on the preparatory and consultative processes used in preparing national reports. These processes, often described as unique or most interesting, have included many entities or representatives of the population not usually involved.

16. The guidelines, while recommending that each country adopt its own procedures, nevertheless suggested that a special committee or working group be established which could be comprised of representatives of governmental ministries and agencies at various levels, representatives of the non-governmental community - industry, trade unions, science - and other important constituencies such as environmental and developmental groups, women, youth, consumers and indigenous peoples, in addition to experts in key

disciplines such as natural and social sciences, economics, energy, agriculture and urban affairs, etc.

17. Of the 72 countries included, 90 per cent indicated that specific committees on the Conference had been established to prepare for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and also to prepare the national report. In 50 countries, or 70 per cent, there appears to have been full and close participation from the non-governmental sectors, especially citizens' affinity groups. Women were specifically mentioned as being represented in at least 25 per cent of the countries and in some cases separate chapters or reports were written on the role of women. Countries seldom made any mention of the nature of the drafting process. At least 29 countries (40 per cent) arranged national seminars or workshops, which may well have included women representatives, to discuss or prepare the national level inputs to the Conference (see attachment 3).

Ministerial involvement in the drafting process

18. Least developed countries reported that a greater number of ministries were involved in the drafting of their national reports than did industrialized countries (more than 50 per cent of country reports from least developed countries drew or the contributions of between 5 and 9 ministries, compared to 40 per cent for industrialized countries; one third of least developed countries had over 10 ministries involved in the process, compared to only 15 per cent of industrialized) (see attachment 4).

19. On the other hand, industrialized countries had specific ministries, departments and commissions for the environment coordinating the drafting process more often than least developed countries did (70 per cent of the time compared to 55 per cent of the time for least developed countries). In the case of the least developed countries (and developing countries), coordinating ministries were often ministries of planning, tourism, natural resources or of forestry.

V. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

20. One general remark is that environmental issues appear to be better covered than developmental ones. It is telling perhaps that reports sometimes indicate names and seemingly very exact numbers for animal or plant species extinct or close to extinction but equally exact figures on population or cost estimates of needs are much more scarce or vague. The percentage figures are only indicative of how many reports mention certain issues (see attachment 5).

Agricultural pressures

21. Sixty reports, or approximately 85 per cent of the 72 reports received, refer to problems or issues directly linked with agriculture. These issues most frequently concern the dangers of excessive or incorrect use of agro-chemicals (40 per cent). Of reports describing agricultural issues about

half refer to soil erosion and soil degradation. Other problems described are over-exploitation, or poor soils, poor or incorrect agricultural practices and salinization.

Demographic pressures

22. Roughly 70 per cent of the reports make reference to demographic pressure as causing concern of one type or another. Of reports describing demographic pressure, 40 per cent mention rapidly increasing population and urbanization problems. Other issues are inadequate housing, i.e. growing slums, etc. The demographic pressures are also often mentioned together with waste management problems, which in turn are reflected in concerns about health and sanitation. Many report health and sanitation-related problems, particularly in urban centres. A number of reports touch upon the negative effects of poorly planned or controlled tourism-related activities. Unemployment is an increasing problem, some expressing particular concerns about unemployed youth. A number of reports express the need for clear national policies on population to address the concerns of population pressure.

Poverty

23. The regional ministerial-level preparatory meetings listed poverty as one of the most important factors, if not the most important impediment to the achievement by developing countries of sustainable development. Poverty as a subject is dealt with separately in document A/CONF/PC.151/100/Add.2. National reports also, in varying detail, dwell on the issue of poverty. Generally the reports do cover important indicators of poverty such as low incomes, inadequate living conditions, low GNP and a heavy debt burden as well as many of the elements mentioned under demographic pressures.

Pressures on forests

24. Pressures on forests are closely interlinked with the demographic and agricultural pressures referred to above. Pressures on forests are mentioned in 70 per cent of the reports and they stem from the use of wood as fuel (30 per cent of reports mentioning forest pressures), logging and clearing, agricultural encroachment, urban encroachment and squatting and forest fires.

25. These pressures on forests are also directly linked to habitat loss. Forty per cent of all analysed national reports bring up habitat loss and also refer to loss of biological diversity and loss of fragile ecosystems.

26. In developing countries forests are under pressure from agricultural expansion and from population pressure in the ongoing quest for more land and fuel wood. Only a few of the developing country reports analysed so far give indications of serious effects from the forestry industry and logging. This figure is also a reflection of the fact that several major forest countries have not yet submitted reports. With depletion of forests there is, of course, the related destruction of biological diversity, sometimes linked with local climate change.

27. In the reports from industrialized nations, including the central and eastern European countries, the concerns regarding forests and forestry are linked to acidification and pollution problems primarily due to emissions from industry and transport, often transboundary in nature, which have a devastating effect on forests. At least two reports from major industrialized forest countries mention the harmful effect of poor logging practices and clear cutting.

Waste management and pollution

28. At least 42 reports or close to 60 per cent indicate that countries have waste management problems of a magnitude that concern them now or will concern them in the immediate future. These problems are linked with the use of agro-chemicals (in at least 27 countries, or almost 40 per cent), household waste (35 per cent) and industrial waste including toxic waste (30 per cent). Coastal and sea pollution is mentioned in 40 per cent of the reports and 50 per cent of the reports express concern about air pollution, sometimes localized to cities or regions; almost 30 per cent mention freshwater pollution including in some cases groundwater pollution; and soil pollution. Specific references to acidification of water, soil and air are frequently made in the industrialized countries. The reports from central and eastern Europe describe sometimes alarming waste management problems, and have identified several national level disaster areas sometimes with transboundary effects. A number of reports, in particular industrialized country reports, state that 50 to 90 per cent of air pollution is transboundary and external to the country concerned.

Water shortage, harsh climate and/or desertification

29. Limited access to freshwater is reported by 35 per cent of the countries, and 75 per cent of these same countries also report waste management problems. It appears that the access to water is often a question of water quality as well as overall availability. A number of countries make reference to a hostile climate with uneven precipitation and climate change; and one fourth of countries with water shortage refer to desertification. These countries are almost all in Africa. Desertification is linked both to the agricultural practices and forest destruction described above. All but one of the countries reporting desertification are developing countries. One large developing country describes desertification in certain provinces as "catastrophic".

Natural disasters

30. A significant number of national reports express concern about natural disaster and disaster response. Almost all island and many coastal States mention the danger of possible sea-level rise. Disasters like floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruption as well as man-made armed conflicts are mentioned in a number of reports.

VI. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AS DESCRIBED IN THE REPORTS

Priority areas

31. As can be expected the priority areas to be addressed correspond with problem areas identified. Approximately 65 per cent of the reports list conservation of the natural resources as a top priority stressing preventive measures over corrective ones. Agriculture and waste management-related issues are mentioned in nearly half of the reports as the most urgent, closely followed by demographic pressure and forestry-related issues. Water and water resources management is singled out in 35 per cent of all reports although this figure most likely is also included in the broader topic of natural resource protection.

32. There are differences depending on the developmental level of a country. For instance, the industrialized countries see the waste management issues as more pressing, with particular concern for air and water pollution (mentioned in 85 to 95 per cent of industrialized country reports), whereas population, urbanization and quality of life (poverty) issues, as well as the above-mentioned agriculture and forest-related issues, are more important to developing countries, in particular the least developed. Other frequently mentioned priorities include energy, food security, debt and desertification.

Means of implementation

33. The above figures are probably lower than in paragraphs 20 to 30 listing main areas of concern because most reports have concentrated on the means for addressing the problems. To address these issues the reports appear to concentrate on the following issues. Strengthening of legislation and enforcement (70 per cent of reports); better planning and coordination (65 per cent); capacity-building including institutional strengthening and research (65 per cent). Some 50 to 60 per cent of reports stress the need for awareness building and environmental education as a priority, as well as a participatory process involving non-governmental organizations which is specifically mentioned in some 30 per cent of reports.

34. Other significant means for addressing the problems are strengthened regional and interrational cooperation (24 to 35 per cent) and funding mechanisms.

Funding

35. Developing countries invariably stress the need for additional funding over and above present technical assistance and a number of countries make references to the need for a "green fund". The analysed reports from the industrialized countries also support the need for additional funding and pledge their commitment for such funds. The funding needs are considerable and will be addressed separately in the document on financial resources and mechanisms, A/CONF.151/PC/101. Generally speaking, figures on funding needs

or the cost of elimination of problems are not sufficiently covered in most reports. As can be expected, industrialized countries tend to have more exact figures although a number of developing country reports also provide good figures at least in some sectors.

Capacity-building

36. Developing countries report a need for capacity adjustments and strengthening to address environment and development-related issues. The capacity-building initiatives, either under way or contemplated, as outlined in the national reports, number in the thousands. Some reports are quite specific about programmes and actions needed, while others are rather general. It is not feasible to summarize in a comprehensive yet succinct manner all the capacity-building proposals into this synthesis report. Most of the suggestions in the reports can best be dealt with at the national level, and these actions form one of the most important ingredients in the follow-up to the Conference.

37. Capacity-building as a general subject is dealt with separately in documents A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.11 and A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.26. UNDP and the Conference secretariat have commissioned a study on capacity-building requirements in developing countries which will be presented separately. Many of the elements in the national reports under this heading will be elaborated in further detail in this study.

VII. EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS

What worked?

38. In reviewing the preparatory process for the national-level preparation and, in particular the national report preparations, one notes a certain pattern or process that seems to have been used in producing a report.

39. A national committee was convened. Consultants were often engaged to prepare draft reports. Most frequently the Environment Ministry or government environment entity concerned was charged with coordinating the work at the national level; but, judging from reports and correspondence, the final versions of the reports were often discussed during national seminars or meetings and then approved by the committee, sometimes a committee of ministers, or even by parliaments. Financial support from a number of sources through the UNDP field offices and a United Nations presence has facilitated preparations in many developing countries.

Process

40. The national report preparations have, in many countries, created a unique "consultative process" mobilizing thousands of people around the world. There are reports that list several pages of participants. The magnitude and the number of problems identified as being part of the

development process are so great that Governments alone cannot address and correct ongoing processes and take the necessary steps to change directions. The Conference process has therefore highlighted not only the usefulness but also the necessity of the involvement of the non-governmental sector of society, such as private industry and a number of affinity groups and associations.

Eco-regional and South-South pooling of resources

41. A number of eco-regional country groupings have also contributed actively to the Conference process, which is reflected in spontaneous regional meetings and reports. It may be advantageous to use these regional groups for regional monitoring within themselves to carry out the monitoring of progress. In this way especially small countries with limited resources could expand their capacities by pooling resources, thus becoming more aware of the problems of neighbouring countries. Examples of such regional groupings which have actively contributed to the process are the Sahelian countries, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) countries, the Amazonian countries, the Pacific island developing countries and the Arctic countries, to mention just a few. This is also touched upon in document A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.26.

42. A number of developing countries have also expressed the view that they hope to learn from others and share their own experiences with others. The national reports contain a great deal of information that potentially is of great direct value for developing countries provided the means for South-South exchange of experiences exist.

43. From the above synthesis it is clear that a lot of momentum has been generated in most States preparing not only the national reports but also for the Conference itself. It is important that this momentum not be lost after the Conference and that some follow-up action be taken. Some of the processes and mechanisms used, such as Conference Committees, may well be worth preserving in one form or another. It is essential that the symbiotic process which has emerged or been strengthened in most countries between Governments and non-governmental sectors continue to address the issues raised at the national level.

44. There are many players at the international level that can assist developing country Governments in maintaining and strengthening the process. Within the United Nations system itself, the key players, because of their mandates, will be UNDP and UNEP supported by the specialized agencies. The role of the World Bank and regional development banks, the regional commissions of the United Nations, as well as other regional organizations and programmes, should be fully considered.

NATIONAL REPORT PREPARATIONS: Status as of 22 November 1991

UN MEMBER STATES	REPORTS RECEIVED: Pages & Languages	rec'd	Diskettes; IBM / Apple
Afghanistan			
Albania			
Algeria	59 (F)	●	No
Angola			
Antigua & Barbuda			
Argentina ◐	538 (S)		No
Australia			
Austria			
Bahamas			
Bahrain			
Bangladesh	114 (E)	●	Yes
Barbados ◐	157 (E)	●	Yes; IBM
Belgium			
Belize ◐	42 (E)	●	No
Benin	119 (E) 94 (F)	●	Yes; IBM
Bhutan			
Bolivia			
Botswana ◐	184 (E)	●	No
Brazil			
Brunei Darussalam			
Bulgaria	106 (E) + Exec Sum	●	Yes; IBM
Burkina Faso	187 (F)	●	2 11/10/91
Burundi	145 (E) 146 (F)	●	Yes
Byelorussian SSR			
Cambodia			
Cameroon			
Canada	128 + Annex (E/F)	●	Yes; IBM & Apple
Cape Verde			
Central African Republic			
Chad	90 (F)	●	Yes;
Chile			
China	86 (E) 103 (C)	●	Yes; IBM
Colombia			
Comoros			
Congo			
Costa Rica	215 + (S) Ann + Exec summary	●	Yes; IBM
Cote d'Ivoire ◐	93 (F)	●	No
Cuba ◐	96 (S)	●	Yes; IBM
Cyprus	46 (E) +24 women + App	●	Yes; IBM
Czech & Slovak Fed. Rep.	141 + App (E)	●	Yes;
Denmark			
Djibouti	105 (F)	●	Yes; Mac
Dominica			
Dominican Republic	137 (S)	●	WP5, But unusable!
Ecuador ◐	115 (S)	●	1
Egypt	267 (A) + Exec Sum 82 (A)		
El Salvador ◐	Prov.Doc. 300(S)	●	
Equatorial Guinea			
Estonia			
Ethiopia			
Federated States of Micronesia			
Fiji	179 (E)	●	Yes; IBM
Finland	137 + (E) Ann	●	Yes; IBM
France	270 (F)	●	1; But unusable.
Gabon ◐	57 (F/E)	●	Yes; IBM
Gambia	101 (E)	●	Yes;
Germany			
Ghana			
Greece			
Grenada			
Guatemala			
Guinea ◐	112 (F)	●	No
Guinea-Bissau			
Guyana			
Haiti			
Honduras	67+An(S) 67+An(E)	●	Yes; IBM
Hungary			
Iceland			
India			
Indonesia ◐	220 (E) parts of report	●	No
Iran (Islamic Republic of)			
Iraq			
Ireland			
Israel			
Italy			
Jamaica			
Japan			
Jordan	66 (A) 60 (E)	●	No Yes; IBM
Kenya ◐	242 (E)	●	Yes, IBM
Korea (Dem Rep)			
Korea (Rep)			
Kuwait			
Lao People's Dem. Rep.			
Latvia			
Lebanon	132 (F) 134 (E)	●	Yes;
Lesotho	71 + 1989 Env. Plan (E)	●	Yes; IBM
Liberia (pos suspended)			
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya			
Liechtenstein			
Lithuania			
Luxembourg			
Madagascar			
Malawi ◐	100 (E)	●	No
Malaysia			
Maldives			

● Received and analyzed

◐ Not final

E English
F French
S Spanish
R Russian
C Chinese
A Arabic
P Portuguese

Attachment 1

UN MEMBER STATES	Pages & Language	rec'd	Diskette; Software
Mali			Yes;IBM
Malta			
Marshall Islands	36(E) includ. attach.	●	No
Mauritania	189 (F)	●	No
Mauritius			
Mexico			
Mongolia ●	95 + (E) 103 Ann	●	No
Morocco ●	104 (F)	●	No
Mozambique	178 (E)	●	No
Myanmar			
Namibia			
Nepal ●	186 (E)	●	No
Netherlands	91 (E)	●	Yes; IBM
New Zealand			
Nicaragua			
Niger ●	76 + (F) Annexes	●	No
Nigeria	48 + Annex (E)	●	expected 9/91
Norway			annex on disk
Oman			
Pakistan			
Panama			
Papua New Guinea			
Paraguay ●	Comments & Exec.Sum.	●	
Peru			
Philippines ●	200 (E) + Exec.Sum. (final) 18(E)	●	No No

UN MEMBER STATES	Pages & Languages	rec'd	Diskette Software
Poland	36 (E)	●	Yes; Unknown
Portugal	91 (P)		No
Qatar	67 (A)		No
Romania	93 + (E) Annex	●	Yes; IBM
Rwanda	111 (F) 'National Strategy'	●	Yes; IBM rec'd 18/10
Saint Kitts & Nevis			
Saint Lucia			
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines			
Samoa	63 (E)	●	12/11/91
Sao Tome & Principe			
Saudi Arabia ●	124 + (E) Annex	●	No
Senegal	117 (F)	●	No
Seychelles			
Sierra Leone			
Singapore	75 (E)	●	
Solomon Islands	87 (E)	●	No
Somalia			
South Africa	196 (E) + Exec.Sum.	●	No
Spain	157 (S) + Annexes	●	coming
Sri Lanka	170 (E)	●	No
Sudan	300 (E)	●	No

UN MEMBER STATES	Pages & Languages	rec'd	Diskette Software
Suriname			
Swaziland	98 (E) + Annex	●	Yes; IBM
Sweden	143 (E)	●	Yes; IBM
Syrian Arab Republic			
Thailand			
Togo			
Trinidad & Tobago ●	86 (E) + Appendix	●	No
Tunisia			
Turkey	194 (E)	●	Yes; unusable
Uganda	86 (E)	●	Yes; IBM
Ukrainian SSR	37 (R) 38 (E)	●	No No
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Vol I 213 (R) Vol II 241 (R)	●	
United Arab Emirates			
United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland	White paper (E) Update	●	Yes;
United Republic of Tanzania	250 (E)	●	Yes; IBM
United States of America			
Uruguay			
Vanuatu	70 (E)	●	Yes;

UN MEMBER STATES	Pages & Language	rec'd	Diskette Software
Venezuela			
Viet Nam	150 (E) + annex	●	Yes; IBM
Yemen	127 (A)		Yes; Mac.
Yugoslavia	119 (E) 39 draft policy (E)	●	
Zaire			
Zambia			
Zimbabwe			

OTHER NATIONAL AND REGIONAL REPORTS	Pages & Languages		Diskette Software
Switzerland			
CARICOM			
SADCC	Outline for comments	●	
PIDC ● (South Pacific Island Developing Countries) *	138 + (E) Annex		No
Cook Islands			
Kiribati			
Niue * *	80 + Annexes (E)	●	
Tokelau	57 (E)	●	Yes; IBM
Tonga	54 (E)	●	No
Tuvalu			
ARCTIC **	405 (E) 45	●	No
ANTARCTIC			

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NATIONAL REPORTS -- DESCRIPTORS

Air:
- A1: atmosphere
- A2: climate
- A3: ozone layer
- A4: air pollution
- A5: greenhouse effect
- A6: acidification

Biological:
- B1: biological diversity
- B2: flora
- B3: fauna

Waste:
- C1: waste management
- C2: hazardous wastes
- C3: solid wastes
- C4: toxic chemicals
- C5: illegal traffic
- C6: noise
- C7: radioactive waste
- C8: fertilizers
- C9: pesticides

Social / Political:
- D1: impact of war
- D2: legislation
- D4: state liability
- D3: sovereignty

Environment:
- E1: environment (history)
- E2: environment (future)

Finance-related:
- F1: financing
- F2: development aid

Welfare:
- H1: living conditions
- H2: health
- H3: quality of life
- H4: working conditions
- H5: social security
- H6: sanitation

Information:
- I1: monitoring
- I2: communication
- I3: information
- I4: cultural heritage
- I5: environmental assessment

Land:
- L1: land resources
- L2: forest resources
- L3: deforestation
- L4: desertification
- L5: erosion
- L6: soil
- L7: soil degradation
- L8: drought
- L9: land tenure
- L10: wetlands

Macroeconomic:
- M1: debt
- M2: trade
- M3: economic growth
- M4: income
- M5: wealth distribution
- M6: production patterns
- M7: consumption patterns
- M8: government expenditure
- M9: tax
- M10: subsidies
- M11: employment
- M12: informal sector
- M13: investment
- M14: inflation

Level:
- N1: global level
- N2: national level
- N3: regional level
- N4: international cooperation
- N5: local level

Organizations:
- O1: international organizations
- O2: intergovernmental organizations
- O3: non-governmental organizations
- O4: UN system
- O5: regional organizations
- O6: transnational corporations
- O7: grassroots

Population / Special Groups:
- P1: population
- P2: rural
- P3: urban
- P4: women
- P5: youth
- P6: vulnerable groups
- P7: poverty
- P8: children
- P9: migration
- P10: human resources
- P11: ethnic groups
- P12: indigenous population

Conservation:
- R1: resource status
- R2: nature conservation
- R3: restoration
- R4: recycling
- R5: parks
- R6: protection
- R7: afforestation
- R8: natural disasters
- R9: fragile zones

Sectoral:
- S1: mining
- S2: energy
- S3: industry
- S4: infrastructure
- S5: transport
- S6: housing
- S7: services
- S8: health services
- S9: social services
- S10: education
- S11: tourism
- S12: agriculture
- S13: animal husbandry
- S14: fisheries
- S15: forestry
- S16: hunting
- S17: gathering
- S18: raw materials
- S19: fishing

Technology-related:
- T1: technology transfer
- T2: human capital
- T3: science
- T4: research
- T5: equipment
- T6: information exchange
- T7: biotechnology
- T8: technology

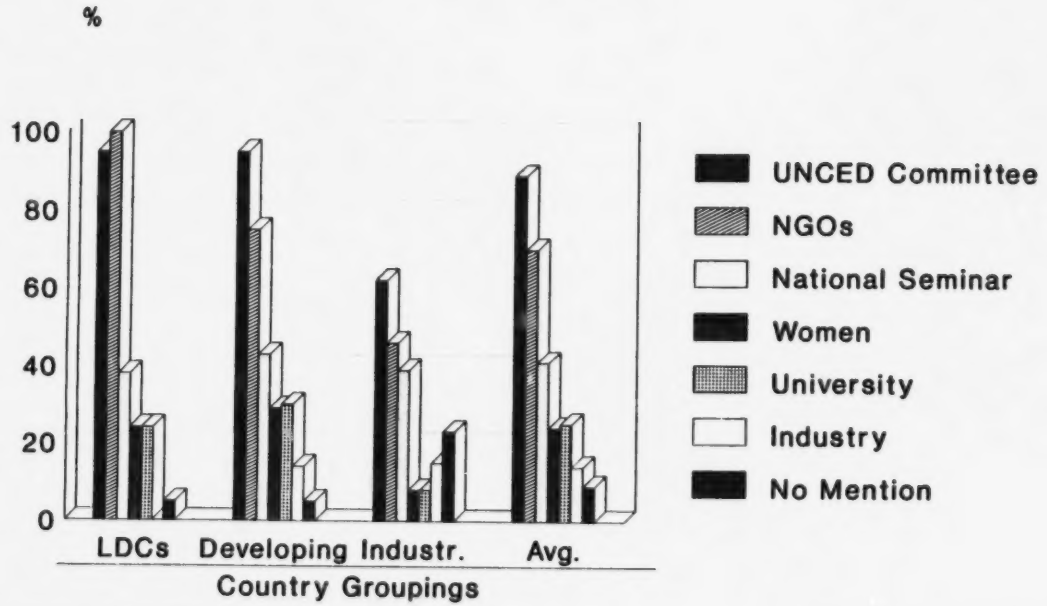
Water:
- W1: freshwater resources
- W2: seas
- W3: brackish water
- W4: groundwater
- W5: eutrophication
- W6: water pollution
- W7: rainfall

General:
- Z1: background
- Z2: recommendations
- Z3: problem areas
- Z4: existing programmes
- Z5: environmental policy
- Z6: sustainable development

Attachment 2

National Report Drafting Process

% of reports showing involvement of various groups & sectors



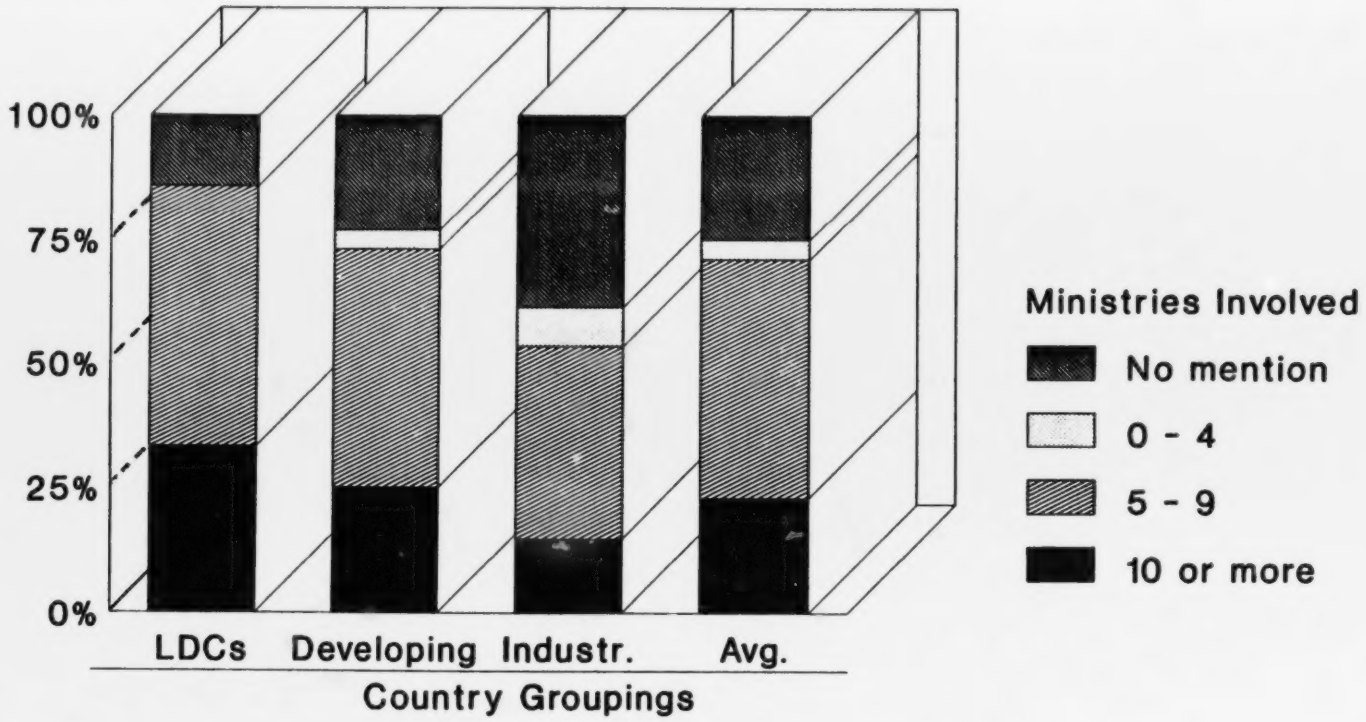
Data drawn from 72 National Reports, received by cut-off date of 22/11/1991

NB. Involvement of women, universities and industry may also be reflected in the figures for NGOs

Attachment 3

National Report Drafting Process

% of reports showing the number of ministries involved in the process



Data drawn from 72 National Reports,
received by cut-off date of 22/11/1991

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Attachment 4

MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED PROBLEM AREAS IN NATIONAL REPORTS

	Developing Countries	Least Developed Countries	Industrial-ized Countries	Central & Eastern Europe	All Analyzed Reports
Agricultural Pressures					
Agro-chemicals					
Soil Erosion & Degradation					
Demographic Pressures					
Population Growth					
Urbanization					
Housing / Slums					
Pressures on Forests					
Habitat Loss					
Waste Management					
Household Waste					
Industrial Waste					
Freshwater Pollution					
Marine Pollution					
Air Pollution					
Water Scarcity					

= 75 - 100%

= 50 - 74%

= 25 - 49%

= 0 - 24%

The shading indicates the percentage of reports in each country group referring to a particular problem area. There may be some overlap of these problem areas; for instance, population growth and urbanization are part of the general issue of demographic pressure. (see text, paragraphs 20 - 30).

Data drawn from 72 National Reports prepared for UNCED, as of 22/11/91

Attachment 5

UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.151/PC/99
13 February 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC/ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON ENVIRONMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT
Fourth session
New York, 2 March-3 April 1992
Item 2 (b) of the provisional
agenda*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: RELEVANT ACTIONS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER BODIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

Note by the Secretary-General of the Conference

The Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development has the honour to transmit to the Preparatory Committee for the Conference at its fourth session, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/228, the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, held at Cairo from 10 to 12 September 1991 (see annex).

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* A/CONF.151/PC/96.

92-06852 2848c (E) 240292 250292

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ANNEX

Report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, held at Cairo from 10 to 12 September 1991*

* The report is circulated in the languages of submission only.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is submitted to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in response to resolution 44/228 adopted by the General Assembly in December 1989. The resolution recommends that the results of such regional conferences be incorporated into the "preparatory process for the Conferene, bearing in mind that regional conferences should make important substantive contributions to the Conference".

2. The General Assembly agreed, by its resolution 44/228, to include nine issues for discussion in the UNCED, to be held in Brazil in June 1992. The report will reflect the position of the Arab countries vis-a-vis these issues.

3. The Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development recognized, in its meeting held in Cairo from 10 to 12 September 1991, that the safeguard of environment requires overcoming major obstacles that hinder this endeavour such as poverty, ignorance and disease. Consequently, the Conference stressed the need for enhancing efforts aimed at bridging the gap between developed and developing countries, and requested the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to prepare a report for submission to the Preparatory Committee for the UNCED at its fourth session. The report should include the full text of the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development and Future Prospects adopted at Cairo Conference.

II. PREPARATORY WORK

1. Mandate

4. The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development "Our Common Future", calls for convening follow-up conferences at the national, regional and international levels. The General Assembly reiterated this recommendation in its resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 of 11 December 1987. The resolutions also stressed, inter alia, that sustainable development "should become a central guiding principle of the United Nations, governments and private institutions, organizations and enterprises".

5. At its fifteenth session held in 18 May 1989, ESCWA adopted resolution 165(xv) on follow-up to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, in which the Commission noted the convergence of interests between developed and developing countries on environmental issues, stressed the importance of multilateral cooperation and requested ESCWA Executive Secretary to undertake the necessary preparations at the regional level with a view to drawing up a report on the position of the Commission to be submitted to (UNCED).

6. In the light of General Assembly resolution 44/228, ESCWA initiated contacts at the regional level to convene the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development with the participation of all member countries of the League of Arab States with the following objectives in mind:

- To examine the environmental conditions in the Arab countries, identify the ecological features, and exert joint efforts to deal with major environmental issues in the socio-economic development process in the Arab countries;

- To recommend measures to be taken at the national and regional levels to protect and enhance environment by incorporating sustainable and environmentally sound development in the economic and social development process in the Arab countries;

- To examine the strategies for national and regional action in response to the challenges of incorporating environmental considerations in the national socio-economic programmes ensuring sustainability as basic contributions to the UNCED;

- To evolve a unified Arab position with regard to environmental and developmental issues in the deliberations of the UNCED.

2. Venue and invitation

7. In the light of the resolution adopted by ESCWA secretariat and in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme, the Commission decided to send its specialized staff for discussions to selected Arab countries and the Chairman of the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Ministers on Environment for consultations. It was agreed to hold the Conference in Baghdad during the first quarter 1990. But due to the Gulf Crisis and the outbreak of war in the Gulf Area, the Conference was postponed till September 1991, whereby the government of Egypt offered to host the Conference in Cairo, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, the League of Arab States and ESCWA.

3. The Secretariat

8. A Secretariat for the Conference was established at ESCWA, under the auspices of the Executive Secretary and selected substantive Chiefs of Divisions. Throughout the period of preparatory works in Baghdad, Amman and Cairo, close relations were established with the relevant national and regional institutions particularly the ministries of planning and environment in the Arab countries.

9. There was continuous dialogue with the Secretariat of the League of Arab States and consultations were held with the United Nations Development Programme at regular intervals. The Secretariat of the Conference also engaged, to a great extent, the services of professional staff from various Arab countries.

10. The United Nations Development Programme provided funds for the participation of the representatives of the least developed Arab countries and extended financial support to the preparations for the Conference.

4. Agenda

11. After consultations with ESCWA member states, the League of Arab States and with the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Ministers on Environment, three main topics were included in the agenda:

(a) Draft document of Arab Perspective on Environment and Development;

(b) Draft document of the Proposed Programme of Action for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in the Arab countries;

(c) Draft document of the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Environment, Development and Future Prospects.

5. The Preparatory Committee

12. The Preparatory Committee for this Conference which consisted of representatives from ESCWA, the UNDP, UNEP, the League of Arab States, Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency held six meetings prior to the commencement of the Conference formal work on 10 September 1991.

13. At its first meeting held in Cairo in April 1991, the Committee approved the three main topics, and proceedings of the preparatory meetings, as to time, venue and schedule.

14. The meetings of the Preparatory Committee provided an opportunity for the discussion of the priorities, objectives and arrangements related to sustainable development. Although the reports prepared by ESCWA were not binding to Governments, they were considered as official documents of the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development and a useful bases for formulating "the Arab Declaration on Environment, Development and Future Prospects", adopted by the Conference as an official document. The concrete contributions of the League of Arab States and other parties constituted a valuable basis for the successful implementation of the preparatory process.

III. ARAB MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (Cairo, 10-12 September 1991)

1. Venue

15. The Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development was held in Cairo from 10 to 12 September 1991.

2. Participants

16. The Conference was attended by the following Ministers and representatives of ESCWA member States and the League of Arab States: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunis, United Arab Emirates and Yemen Republic.

17. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended the Conference: the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the Preparatory Committee for the UNCED, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Health Organization, Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, World Meteorological Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the World Bank.

18. Representatives of the following regional specialized governmental and non-governmental organizations also attended the meeting: Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands, Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), Arab

Fund for Economic and Social Development, General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries, Arab Organization for Industrial Development and Metallurgy, Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), French Research Centre, General Federation of Arab Women, and Green Peace.

3. Opening of the Conference

19. His Highness Prince Fahd Bin Abdallah Al Saud opened the Conference in his capacity as Chairman of the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Ministers on Environment. In his opening statement, he stressed the contribution of developing countries in formulating policies and guidelines to be adopted by the UNCED so as to reflect the legitimate aspirations of these countries for sustainable development. He added that current environmental problems were aggravated by industrial activities and consumption patterns in industrialized countries. He stressed the need for bridging the gap between the developing and industrialized countries, as poverty was one of the major obstacles hindering the adoption of a rational developmental policy for the conservation of environment. He expressed his hope that the meeting will attain a common perception of issues to be raised in the Brazil Conference. He urged Arab regional organizations to coordinate and implement environmental and developmental policies in order to revitalize the economies of the countries of the region. He recommended the participation of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States in the fourth Preparatory Meeting and Brazil Conference for assisting Arab countries in the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the Conference.

20. In the opening session, ESCWA Executive Secretary, Mr. Tayseer Abdel Jaber delivered a speech in which he stressed, the importance of the Conference for determining the position of ESCWA member countries and other Arab countries with regard to regional and international environmental issues. He said that since the countries of Western Asia and other Arab countries were situated at the centre of the world they were more exposed than other countries to environmental hazards. Enumerating environmental hazards, such as pollutants, climatic changes, toxic wastes, nuclear energy uses, increased urbanization and the destruction of plant cover he stressed the fact that this globe has been entrusted to the care of the present generation as a pledge to be redeemed by future generations. He said that although most of the threats to global environment are the result of economic activities in the industrialized countries, efforts to deal with these risks should not be confined to those countries, but should rather be part of the development process in each country. Such risks do not know geographical and political borders. He concluded his speech by presenting a summary of documents prepared by ESCWA for consideration by the Cairo Conference.

21. Mr. Atef Ebeid, Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for Administrative Development in the Arab Republic of Egypt, welcomed the participants on behalf of Prime Minister, Mr. Atef Sidki, and expressed the hope that the UNCED to be held in Brazil in 1992 will reach practicable recommendations to address environmental problems. He drew attention to the role to be played by the recently-established Center for Environment and Development for Arab Countries and Europe as a leading organ for the implementation of the environmental strategy in the Arab world. He referred to the efforts being made to implement the plan of action for environmentally

sound development in Egypt which includes a comprehensive survey of the situation of environment, the compilation and registration of information on natural resources, and formulation of projects for the protection of environment and related legislations. He concluded his statement by calling on the Conference to put forward specific practicable programmes, determine the institutions which will be entrusted with their implementation, and the necessary sources of finance.

22. Mr. Mohamed Abdallah Nour, United Nations Development Programme, Assistant Administrator/Regional Director, RBASED, referred to developmental and environmental issues in the Arab region, in particular water supply issues and called for its rational use, equitable distribution and protection from pollution. He stressed the need to address the problems of desertification, maritime and industrial pollution, natural disasters and to make efforts to prevent their occurence. He referred to the establishment of the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Countries and Europe at the initiative of the United Nations Development Programme in cooperation with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). He reviewed the Centre's objectives which focus on achieving programmes that deal with the economic and social aspects of sustainable development, rational use of energy, the development and training of human resources, administrative regulations, and making policies for the protection of the environment. He expressed UNDP's support to the meeting and to the efforts aimed at drawing up a work programme for environment preservation in the Arab region.

23. At the beginning of his statement Dr. Yousef Nimatalla, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs of LAS expressed the pleasure of the Arab League as a forum for Arab gathering, at the presence of all Arab States at the Conference. He also expressed the Leagues' readiness to extend all the necessary technical assistance and co-ordination for the success of the Conference. He further recalled the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development (1986) which encompass the regional principles and guidelines for Arab environmental action, the enhancement of its government and administrative structures and the importance of achieving development within the framework of environment protection and preservation of resources. Dr. Nimatalla also recalled the programmes of the council of Arab Ministers of Environmental Affairs which constitute a combination of fruitful Arab efforts, the importance of the issues presented at the Conference and the expected conclusions that would lead to a comprehensive future Arab perception of development action within the framework of a best preserved Arab environment.

24. In his statement, Mr. Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of the UNCED, congratulated the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Development Programme, the League of Arab States and the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency for holding the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Cairo which is situated in the midst of the Arab region, cradle of civilizations, religions and scientific achievements from ancient times. He expressed regret at the conflicts and instability in the region stressing that these factors represent the greatest enemies to environment and development. Then, he stated subjects of essential importance to the Arab region which will be addressed at the Conference in Brazil, in particular poverty, the rational use of natural resources, and the achievement of environmental security. He said that Brazil Conference will call for effective fundamental economic changes in the behaviour of

individuals, corporations and countries with a view to changing the pattern of international economic relations, particularly between developing and industrialized countries.

He stressed in particular the importance of fresh water resources in the Arab region where only four per cent of the land is arable and said that the availability of water is the only way to achieve food security. He referred to energy which represents another principal resource in the economies of the region and said that oil-producing countries in the region have no ground for fearing the measures aimed at reducing the use of fossil fuel which threatens global climate, because oil and natural gas are less polluting than coal. He also referred to solar energy which will be used increasingly, as it is available on a large scale in the Arab region.

He emphasized that in spite of the fact that the World Commission on Environment and Development called in its report "Our Common Future", in 1987, for integrating the environmental dimension in order to achieve sustainable development, only a few of the goals pursued were achieved. He referred to the burden which the requirements related to environment protection place on developing countries, in particular the handicaps it puts on their development. He urged the developed countries to do their utmost to alleviate the debt burden of developing countries through imposing special charges on environmentally harmful products and practices. He referred to the presence of encouraging signs such as the establishment of the Global Environment Facility managed by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, he also referred to the agreement concluded in 1990 on the ozone layer depletion.

He stressed the need to address the poverty issue in the least developed countries where sustainable development is urgently needed in view of the dangers threatening their natural resources. He also pointed to the wide gap between all countries in the Arab region.

Mr. Strong emphasized that industrialized countries, because of their economic and industrial activities, are largely responsible for most of environmental pollution and are duty bound to make greater efforts to protect the environment and encourage developing countries by providing them with additional financial resources to facilitate their access to environmentally sound technologies. He praised the role of scientific institutions in the region, particularly the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe, recently established by the United Nations Development Programme, and said it will be an important addition to the capabilities of the region regarding environment protection.

Mr. Strong concluded his statement by stating the issues which will be addressed at the UNCED and hoped that Arab countries would play a positive role in the work of the Conference.

4. Election of Officers

25. Mr. Atef Ebeid, Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for Administrative Development, representative of Egypt, was elected Chairman of the Conference, while Mr. Hadj Sherif Soleiman, Minister for Scientific

Research, Technology and Environment, representative of Algeria, and Mr. Abdelhamid Al-Mounjed, Minister of Environment in the Syrian Arab Republic, were elected Vice-Chairmen.

26. Mr. Abd Albarr Alkin, Director General of the Meteorological and Environment Protection Agency, Secretary-General of the Ministerial Commission for the Protection of Environment in Saudi Arabia was elected Rapporteur. The representatives of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait ESCWA and LAS were elected members of the Drafting Committee under the chairmanship of the Rapporteur.

5. Adoption of the Agenda

27. The Conference adopted the following agenda, which is included in document E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991:

1. Opening of the Conference.

2. Election of Officers.

3. Adoption of the Agenda.

4. Discussion of the Draft Document of the Arab Perspective on Environment and Development.

5. Discussion of the Draft Document of the Proposed Programme of Action on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in the Arab Countries.

6. Discussion of the Draft Document of the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development and Future Prospects.

7. Adoption of the Final Report and Closure of the Conference.

IV. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT DOCUMENT OF THE ARAB PERSPECTIVE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.1)

28. ESCWA Secretariat reviewed in this document the Arab perspective on environment vis-a-vis the urgent problems such as population growth, the depletion of water resources, the widening of the food gap, the spread of industrial pollution, and the inadequacy of environmental services. The document calls for supporting and developing endogenous capabilities and for cooperation with industrial states and scientific research institutes, making efforts to encourage counter-migration from urban to rural areas and changing consumption patterns in order to cope with the real needs and available resources. The Secretariat also emphasized the need for promoting national environmental information networks and connecting them with an Arab information bank linked to regional and international information banks, in order to make optimum use of available information in the studies aimed at assessing the environmental impact.

29. In the field of joint Arab action, the document stressed the need to coordinate and integrate Arab efforts in view of the common goal pursued and the desire to provide decent standard of living to Arab people and protect the Arab region from the rapid spread of pollution and the increasing tendency towards regionalism in development and environment, and the need for regional integration so as to eliminate the great disparity between Arab countries. All this require the support of environmental planning and its integration into development plans along with the development of human resources in the areas of planning, assessment and environment management, while emphasizing complementarity of the Arab strategy with the international strategy.

30. The document summarized the issues which will be addressed at the UNCED and referred to the specificity of the environmental problems in the Arab region, in particular the regional conflicts, restrictions imposed by industrial states on the transfer of technology, and the migration of Arab skills to advanced countries. (Annex I contains a summary of this document and review of technical issues in an attempt to determine the Arab perspective vis-a-vis these issues).

V. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT DOCUMENT OF PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.2A and 2B)

31. This document contains a review of constraints facing sustainable development in the Arab countries: deterioration of natural resources; inadequate consideration of environment in national policies and development plans; weakness of administrative systems dealing with environment, insufficient awareness of environmental problems, lack of popular participation; dependence on curative solutions rather than on preventive measures; inadequacy of research institutes, instability and frequent armed conflicts which have led to the diversion of a great portions of financial resources away from the protection of environment.

32. The document also summarizes the main components of the proposed programme of action which is divided into two parts: the first one comprises six priority issues and the second three issues with a world dimension rather than a regional or national one. The priority issues are the following: land resources, water resources, marine environment and coastal areas, rural and urban development, waste management and human health and well-being. Each subject contains an enumeration of the problems faced by Arab countries along with the issues to be covered by the special programme of action to solve the problem or at least to limit its harmful and negative effects.

33. World issues include the protection of biological diversity, biotechology, genetic engineering, and stratosphere issues. The document refers to the extinction of certain animals and plants in the Arab countries as a result of the destruction of the environment or the pollution. The document recommends supporting the efforts made by research centers, the establishment of national gene banks and the creation of protected areas. The document also points out that research in the field of biotechnology will offer new possibilities for increasing food production, energy and chemicals.

However, biotechnology was now dominated by the private sector in industrialized countries, thus complicating the transfer of appropriate technologies to developing countries. The document recommends strengthening the capabilities of scientific institutes and finding appropriate means to transfer biotechnologies in the region on soft conditions so as to enhance, in particular, food production.

34. Concerning the stratosphere issues, the document points out that Arab countries do not manufacture chlorofluorocarbons which are responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer. As for the emission of greenhouse gases, none of the Arab countries was among the 20 countries responsible for the emission of more than 80 per cent of these gases.

35. Finally, the document points out that the proposed programme of action for environmentally sound and sustainable development requires massive financial resources and close cooperation between the Arab countries, for the problems in this field are beyond the capability of any single country to solve. Thus the document calls for strengthening regional and international cooperation and encouraging creditor countries to allocate part of their receivables from some indebted Arab countries for the improvement and protection of the environment.

36. The second part of the draft document of the proposed programme of action for environmentally sound and sustainable development in the Arab countries contains proposed project ideas in the field of environment and development in the Arab countries (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.2B) namely:

- Rationalization of the use of water in the Arab region;
- Rationalization of the use of energy sources;
- Environmentally sound and sustainable industrial development;
- Food security and environmentally sound and sustainable agricultural development;
- Human settlement and their impact on environment;
- Population planning and public health services;
- Integration of environmental considerations into national development plans.
- The Arab network for environmental monitoring.

37. Each project proposal contains an enumaration of its goals, a summary of the relevant resolutions, and an outline of an operational programme in two phases: a short-term phase (3-5 years) and a long-term phase (5-10 years). Then it proposes secondary priority operational programmes to be implemented on Arab bilateral and subregional levels in cooperation with international financing institutions. The details of this document are contained in Annex 2B.

38. After reviewing the above-mentioned documents, the Executive Secretary of ESCWA asserted that the documents under consideration comprising sectoral reports and other technical reports were used to prepare the first draft of the Arab Declaration on Environment, Development, and Future Prospects.

39. The heads of delegations made policy statements on environmental challenges in the nineties, the protection of environment and the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development. The delegations also expressed deep concern at the rapid deterioration of the environment in the Arab region and requested that steps should be taken immediately to stop the present trends.

40. The delegations described the situation of the environment at the national level and the efforts made recently by their countries to protect the environment, stressing the need to re-direct economic development towards sustainability. Reference was made to the problems of water shortage, desertification, land degradation, poverty, population growth, natural resources depletion, environmental disasters resulting from the occupation of land by force, worldwide environmental problems, in particular the depletion of the ozone layer and climatic changes, as the most important and urgent issues related to environment and development facing the Arab region. The participants stressed the need to address these issues on the national, regional and international levels through the efforts made to implement the principles of environmentally sound and sustainable development.

41. The Conference supported the efforts made by ESCWA in area of regional cooperation to improve and coordinate environmental and developmental activities in the Arab region, including preparation of draft report on a regional strategy for environmentally sound and sustainable development, as a contribution to the Brazil Conference.

42. The delegations were generally of the view that problems of environment could not be seperated from national realities and international economic factors which were still perpetuating poverty, that taking initiatives to solve environmental problems requires concerted regional and international cooperation on the basis of equitable sharing of responsibilities and that limiting environmental degradation was in keeping with the basic interests of developing countries. Several delegations called on industrialized countries to shoulder their responsibilities for achieving sustainable development as well as providing financial resources in line with the practicies of the Fund for Ozone Layer Protection.

43. The Conference urged, UNDP, UNEP the World Bank, and other international and development organizations to increase their assistance in the field of environment and development in the Arab region.

44. The Conference expressed its appreciation for the preparation of the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, and for the quality of the documents prepared by the Preparatory Committee. It praised the great efforts made by ESCWA, UNDP and the League of Arab States in the preparations for the Conference.

VI. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT DOCUMENT "ARAB DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS" (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.3)

45. Ministers from countries of the ESCWA region and other Arab countries as well as representatives from UN agencies and international and regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations took part in the discussion of the draft declaration.

46. The meeting stressed the importance of the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development and its decisive role in the preparatory work undertaken by the Arab countries for the UNCED. It recognized the important role to be played by ESCWA in the preparatory work for the 1992 conference. It also stressed the need to eliminate poverty, ignorance and disease, as the main obstacles to development and the cause of environmental degradation in the Arab countries.

47. The Conference pointed out the outstanding character of the Arab region which was, and still is, the cradle of civilization and divine religions that call for devoting care for man and the environment. It also noted the common heritage and history, and the homogeneous geographical location which interacts with the natural environment due to the developmental and human activities. The Conference expressed concern at the serious environmental dangers which continue to affect this part of the world, due to wars and armed conflicts, and persistent of tension stemming from the failure to reach a just solution to the Palestinian question, which hampers development and leads to the destruction of resources and increased environmental deterioration. The participants stressed the urgent need for finding an international solution to those dangers.

48. The Conference expressed satisfaction at the inclusion, in the draft declaration, of the principles of sustainability and environmentally sound development, in order to preserve the well being of future generations. It also expressed its gratitude for the commitment undertaken to work at the individual and collective levels and through Arab environmental cooperation programmes for encouraging equal participation in sustainable and environmentally sound development; minimizing adverse environmental effects on economic development through the integration of environmental considerations into the planning activities and economic and sectoral policies; setting up policies for the use of resources and development planning, based on preventive principles; and contributing to international efforts aimed at finding solutions to the urgent environmental problems at the global level.

49. The Conference also called on the international community to respect the right of the Arab people to protect its natural resources, while recognizing the importance of socio-economic factors in the activities of natural resources management. This could be achieved by adopting populations policies and encouraging consumption patterns which consolidate sustainable development; increasing public awareness and understanding of the cultural and environmental heritage and encouraging the community, especially women, to take positive stands towards the environment through scientific research, education, and dissemination of information, facilitating the adaptation of appropriate technologies; ensuring effective use of allocated funds from

national budgets and international sources for the protection of the environment; inclusion of health considerations and nutritional needs into development planning; and increasing the private sector's participation in achieving sustainable and environmentally sound development.

50. Following lengthy discussions and important amendments, the Conference adopted the Arab Declaration on Environment, Development and Future Prospects, as an official document of the Conference. The participants called on the fourth Preparatory Committee of UNCED, to take into full account the concerns expressed in the Arab Declaration. (The full text of the Declaration is in Annex III).

51. The participants also identified new priorities for their cooperation at the regional and international levels. They agreed to request the Preparatory Committee for UNCED to give priority to environmental projects with direct and immediate impact on development, in particular, those projects related to the life and future of the Arab fellow and the future of coming generations, as follows:

I. PROPER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND DEVELOPMENT

52. In order to meet the basic needs of a community and enhance the feeling of belonging and constructive interaction with the environment, it is necessary to ensure sustainable development by encouraging projects which involve rational use of natural resources and less harm to the environment; supporting family planning programmes to control population growth; promoting self-reliance in providing wider employment opportunities in the Arab world and adopting the principle of environment assessment in developing projects.

II. PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT

53. Through developing administrative institutions entrusted with the preparation and implementation of environment conservation programmes; revising environment legislation in such a way as to meet the actual needs to achieve a balance between environment and development; encouraging the establishment of local institutions for the implementation of environment protection programmes in urban communities and industrial cities, and limiting the use of installations and products with harmful environmental impacts.

III. DEVELOPING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

54. With a view to promoting urban and rural environment through encouraging environment services programmes; using local materials and appropriate technologies, including traditional technologies used in construction methods; encouraging waste recycling projects; devoting attention to the environmental degradation and its negative impacts on the resources and living conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories as a result of environmentally harmful arbitrary practices of the Israeli occupation authorities.

IV. DEVELOPING WATER AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

55. Through establishing an integrated Arab plan for environmental monitoring, including water monitoring and follow up on water discharge and flood and torrents predictions; promoting studies to update information on groundwater basins, identify the quantity and quality of their water content and establish integrated environmental plans for its use; developing water resources to meet the increasing needs of agricultural, industrial and urban development; using modern irrigation methods; restructuring crop cycles; and implementing programmes for the treatment of sewage and industrial wastes.

V. COMBATTING DESERTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AL-BADIA (ARID) AREAS

56. Promoting national, regional and international efforts through increasing the cultivated area and supporting and encouraging regional projects of green belts in North Africa and Badiat-Al-Sham, the Arab Peninsula, and the African Horn; developing Al-Badia areas; encouraging environmental and development support programmes; promoting the grazing areas development projects in the Arab world in such a way as to achieve ecologial balance in these sensitive areas.

VI. USES OF ENERGY

57. The Arab countries, being major producers of fossil fuel, though recognizing the increased demand for this resource despite the resulting depletion of such national wealth, call upon the developed countries, as major consumers of energy, to understand the dimensions of this problem. They also call upon these countries to increase their contribution to the provision of appropriate techniques and financial resources in order to contain the negative aspects of the problem and achieve an optimal use of energy. They will thus fulfil the developmental aspirations of the developing countries and enable them to meet the environmental requirements while seeking to: Increase investments for diversifying all sources of energy; implement programmes and policies which prove to be effective in increasing the efficiency of the present sources of energy; use available technologies and develop appropriate new ones to increase operation efficiency in production, distribution and consumption sites; accelerate the implementation of on-going projects in connecting electric grids; updating studies on other pan Arab electric connection projects and assessing environmental, and health implications and cost of such projects.

VII. MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

58. Through continued industrial development while seeking to expand the introduction of affordable, clean, and safe technologies; devoting attention to secondary materials and waste recycling projects; intensifying the efforts of environmental legislative and executive organs in order to develop the industrial environment management systems and the studies conducted to assess the environmental impact of projects, in order to ensure sustainable development; promoting environmentally sound management of hazardous chemicals; establishing records for these wastes and materials; and

establishing national data base to be linked to the international network of the international information bank; emphasizing the need for establishing constructive international cooperation within the framework of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundry Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and developing this Convention so as to include the views and requirements of the developing countries to avoid the risks resulting from the transport and disposal of such wastes.

VIII. PROTECTION OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT

59. Through preparing environmentally sound programmes and methods for the development of coastal areas and the promotion of maritime activities; supporting the efforts for the environment protection and preservation included in maritime and coastal areas development programmes, especially those areas of sensitive environments; calling upon all countries to ratify international agreements on marine environment and to participate in implementing plans aimed at eliminating the sources of pollution in sea and on coasts; urging the international community to prepare plans for avoiding the disasters which threat the marine life, and for dealing with these disasters once they occur.

IX. EDUCATION AND THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE AND RARE NATURAL RESOURCES

60. Through integrating the environmental dimension in the educational curricula and programmes; encouraging inventory projects of rare natural resources and establishing protected natural sites; contributing to international and regional efforts aimed at protecting rare natural species; supporting projects aimed at preserving and protecting the natural heritage from harmful environmental impacts.

X. INCREASING POPULAR INVOLVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

61. Through involving individuals, local communities and non- governmental institutions in following-up the implementation of the environmental protection projects as well as the integrated development projects; emphasizing the role of Arab women in environmental protection, so as to ensure sound environmental education for future generations.

62. The participants also recommended to support Arab environmental institutions and organs including the Council of Arab Ministers on Environment, and its sub-committees, environmental organs in Arab organizations and regional cooperation councils; to coordinate cooperation with organizations concerned with the financing of environmental projects; to support regional plans for the protection of marine environment, including the Kuwait Plan of Action, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden Plan, the Mediterranean Sea Plan, the emergency plans for oil spills and other similar plans; to identify Arab environmental information networks and to prepare an Arab programme for linking such networks with each other and with international network.

63. In order to strengthen international cooperation, the participants recommended to intensify and expand cooperation with United Nations organizations concerned with environmental issues, in particular, the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe, as an example for establishing similar centres in other parts of the world; to participate actively in international environmental activities, and adhere to the international conventions on the use of resources and the reduction of pollution across the countries and the preservation of the quality of the environment and to cooperate with international programmes for the monitoring of environment.

64. The participants also called for the formulation of appropriate legal and legislative provisions to deal with environmental damage or deterioration caused to third countries.

65. The Conference welcomed the various international initiatives related to the financing of international, regional and national projects for preserving the equilibrium between the environment and development, made by the financial funds and environmental preservation projects. The Conference also welcomed the decision of the major industrialized countries to receive part of their debts in local currency and to allocate such amounts to finance environmental protection projects. The Conference emphasized again the need to increase the available financing to these funds through permanent and renewable resources; to use the funds in providing assistance to developing countries in the form of unredeemable grants to help them prepare their plans for environment preservation, conduct of studies on the environmental implications of development projects, and establish national data base on the environment; and to allocate the remaining funds to finance the implementation of projects, in the form of concessional loans, giving priority to the projects ready for implementation.

66. The Conference adopted the Arab Declaration on Environment, Development and Future Prospects, as an official document of the Conference. It requested ESCWA to prepare a report for submission to the fourth Preparatory Committee of the UNCED and the Brazil 1992 Conference.

VII. FOLLOW-UP OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE

67. The documents entitled "Arab Perspective on Environment and Development" and "Proposed Programme of Action for Sustainable and Environmentally Sound Development in the Arab Countries", prepared for the Conference, have been considered by the Meeting, as working papers providing an objective description of concepts and a wide framework for enhancing sustainable and environmentally sound development. The documents could be used to set up programmes and projects for joint Arab action in the fields of environment and development and to agree on appropriate measures to reach such a goal.

68. In view of this, a committee has been formed under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President of the Conference, the Minister of State for Environmental Affairs in the Syrian Arab Republic and with the membership of the Rapporteur of the Conference and the Drafting Committee members, to examine the observations and views expressed by the participants on these two documents.

69. Concerning the issues related to the contribution to be made by ESCWA at the regional level, the Executive Secretary solicited the Conference's directives on the proposed programmes and projects included in the plan of action (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/ WP.2B), and their translation into concrete programmes with determined costs. These programmes should have specific objectives to be achieved within specified periods of time. He added that ESCWA is ready to help in formulating the proposed operational programmes included in the above-mentioned document.

70. The Conference entrusted the Secretariat of the League of Arab States with the preparation of a report on the proposed programmes of work and projects to strengthen the joint Arab action in the fields of environment protection and sustainable development. The report is to be presented for review by a meeting of experts preceeding the meeting of the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Ministers on Environment. It will then be put before the Council of Arab Ministers on Environment, at its third meeting, in Damascus, 21-24 November 1991. The Conference also requested the Secretariat of the League of Arab States to follow up the Arab Delaration on Environment and Development and Future Prospects during the meetings of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to participate in the meeting of the fourth Preparatory Committee.

Annex I

SUMMARY OF ARAB PERSPECTIVE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.1)

After recalling the different international recommendations on the safeguard of environment and regional efforts (General Assembly resolution 42/186 and 42/187 of 1987 and 44/228 of 1989), the document indicates that the Arab world has been coping with those recommendations as manifested in the First Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment (Tunisia 1986), the Arab Declaration on Environment, the formation of an Arab Ministerial Council on Environment and ESCWA resolution 160(XV) of May 1989. The paper summarizes issues that will be presented for discussion at the Brazil Conference, while stating that they do not necessarily reflect the priorities of Arab action in the fields of environment and development due to the special nature of certain Arab environmental problems and the consequences of the deterioration of environmental conditions attributed to development patterns which are based on over exploitation of resources.

I. ARAB PERSPECTIVE AND ASSESSMENT OF TECHNICAL ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE UNCED

1. Protection of resources and quality of fresh water sources

Since most of Arab countries suffer from continuous shortage of fresh water, per capita consumption does not exceed 1000 cubic meters, or half the global rate. Evidently, the persistance of shortage in water adversely affects the programmes of agricultural, industrial and physical expansion. The Arab countries devote attention to dams and water reservoir projects for meeting the needs for irrigation, industry and conrol of losses. Yet no adequate attention is paid to the negative impacts of these projects, such as the changes in vegetation, soil characteristics and impacts on health. The paper stresses the need for consolidating joint efforts to control the quality of water and supporting the projects of fresh water purification.

2. Protection of oceans and coastal areas

Since marine environment constitutes a substantive regional asset and a vital nutritional source, their exploitations should be rationalized. Besides, the coastal towns in several Arab countries represent an important economic source for tourism, and in addition to off-shore oil and gase resources in the gulf countries. However, these areas are exposed to two sources of pollution: a natural sources (geological, climatic and biological factors) and a man made source linked to the problems of reconstruction, such as discharge of sewage water and industrial pollutants. Efforts are being made to treat human and liquid industrial wastes. Arab countries have participated in a number of regional programmes for the protection of sea water such as the Mediterranean Sea Plan, the Red Sea and Aden Gulf Plan.

3. Problems of industrial wastes and dangerous materials

Pollutants have been increasing due to the diversity and expansion of industrial activities. However, since most of these materials are of unknown

contents, their impacts on environment and health is highly impredictable. Despite the efforts made to control industrial pollution, little has been achieved to control the sources of pollution.

4. Promoting health conditions and improving the quality of life

Helath services are concentrated in the cities while rural areas receive no attention. Mental and occupational diseases which are increasing due to the flow of workers to modern industrial complexes are not receiving the required care. Endemic diseases are still widely spreading.

5. Developing living conditions in marginal urban communities and rural areas

With the expansion of cities and the increase of the population density in many Arab countries, the public utilities experiencing increasing pressures. Besides, the expansion of water supply networks has not been accompanied by an increase in the sewage network, resulting in serious problems. The rate of urban development in the Arab countries is expected to be three-fold the rate in the developed countries by the year 2000. Therefore, attention should be concentrated on solving the problems resulting from this huge expansion, such as the deficiency in the means of transport, increase of pollution in the cities, and the absence of recreation facilities. An effective strategy for urban development should be drawn up, decentralization should be achieved in countries with vast areas.

6. Protection of the atmosphere and controlling climatic changes

UNEP expects that the average temperature would increase by 1.5°c by the year 2025. The Arab countries would be most affected by these changes, large Arab cities is suffering from acid rain and air pollution. Therefore, these countries should establish monitoring networks and participate in international networks to monitor air pollution in order to take the necessary protection measures.

7. Protection of land resources and combatting desertification

Desertification and drought are very serious problems facing the Arab region. Although a plan in United Nations has been drawn up in 1977 to combat desertification, its implementation had been hindered by financial and technical difficulties.

Most of the Arab countries suffer from excessive soil salination and inadequate discharge of irrigation water. The problem of the availability of agricultural land has been aggrevated by the random physical expansion in urban areas on the account of agricultural areas. The continuous pressure on agricultural land caused by intensive production would lead to excessive utilization of pesticides. Thus leading to the accumulation of toxic materials in water and soil. It is estimated that about 20 per cent of pastures have lost their green cover, and that more than 50 per cent of the pastures has deteriorated. Moreover pastures are exposed to desertification, exacerbated by the decrease in energy resources which causes increased depletion of forests. All these factors would require effective measures to protect agricultural lands, pastures and forests.

8. Conservation of biological diversity

The absence of adequate support and the aggravation of poverty have led to the extinction of certain biological species of animals, birds and aquatics. Therefore, Arab countries should devote more attention to the preservation of species which are on the brink of extinction.

9. Biotechnology and its impact on the environment

The use of biotechnology and genetic engineering require advanced experience and huge investments for the provision of food and eradication of poverty and disease. However, the monopoly of private interests in the developed countries has brought about negative implications. Increased international efforts should, therefore, be taken to organize the treatment of the biological substances and introduction of safety instructions at the stage of conducting related research in the developing countries where biological control does not exist.

II. ARAB ASSESSMENT OF AREAS OF STRATEGIC ACTION FOR THE UNCED

This section of the working paper summarizes the views of Arab countries in the areas of proposed strategic action for the preparation of international programme of action on environment and development:

1. Financial resources and economic impact on environment protection

The relation between environmental and financial resources assumes special characteristics in the Arab world. This problem resides in the excessive use of resources to meet basic needs. Subsidizing energy prices affected the increase of consumption in energy-intensive industries. Furthermore, subsidizing food prices does not encourage rationalization of its use, and fixing the prices of strategic goods distorts its financial structures, since industrial sectors do not have adequate resources to treat pollution. In the water resource sector, governments endeavour to provide such sevrices especially for the low income groups for prices less than the actual cost. If these prices increase drastically people may resort to the use of ground water which may result in its depletion or in prompting low income groups to use unpotable water which is hazardous to public health.

2. The role of the national and international institutions in the areas of environment and sustainable development

Political committment to rationalize the use of resources and to implement long term programmes should be provided with a view to enhancing environmental conditions. It is proposed to enhance the institutions involved in environmental management in the Arab countries.

3. International treaties and agreement

Arab countries should coordinate their positions vis-a-vis international agreements such as the agreement on climatic change. Since developed countries are primarily responsible for the problems of climatic change, a

just distribution of responsibilities should be ensured. Regarding the Montereal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Arab countries should ratify this protocol with a view to increasing cooperation with developed countries. The Arab countries should also seek agreements on the protection of the quality of water.

4. Transfer of technology

Mechanisms for transfer of technology to developing countries should include means of flexibility, so as to allow the use of local materials, and satisfy the requirements of environmental protection.

III. CHALLENGES OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB WORLD

1. Population growth

The great increase in the world population will definetly lead to the increase of pressure on programmes of development and the safety of people. This problem should be tackled from a new perspective which aims at raising the living standard of low income groups by adopting measures which include: A consideration of educational programmes directing manpower towards projects concerned with maintainenance of resources; encouraging youth to reclaim the desert areas; and adopting effective methods to combat poverty, ignorance and diseases in the rural areas and taking effective measures for birth control.

2. The effect of war and regional conflicts

Ever since the Arab - Israeli war in 1948, the resources of the Arab countries have been depleted contineously by means of wars co-sponsored or motivated by the big powers. like wise, the wars in the Gulf region had serious effects on environment. The vile practicies of the Israeli occupier in the Golan Hights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank affect resources and aggrevate environmental pollution. Owing to its strategic position, the Arab world will always be coveted by those who wish to control this area and its vital resources. Arab countries should, therefore, concentrate on coordinating their economic and environmental policies to provide protection to the Arab world.

3. Environmental awareness

Positive interaction between the Arab citizens and his environment should be promoted by motivating him to get involved in the decision making process and by emphasizing voluntary initiatives and eleminating lack of involvement and by entrenching in him the concepts of environmental protection and conservation of resources, and by involving city councils, non-governmental organizations and women federations in discussing and adopting decisions and following up on their implementation.

4. Environmental legislation

Present legislation should be reviewed to reflect environmental realities and the sustainability of development.

5. Rationalizing the use of energy

Owing to the fact that the increase in prices is not adequate for ensuring rational use of energy more effective measures should be designed in this respect such as energy control and implementation of energy audit projects in the industrial sector.

Annex 2

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.2A)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The concept of development is a multidimensional one, encompassing the economic, social, cultural and political aspects of human society. One of the main deficiencies in traditional approaches to development has concerned its definition. Confusion has been compounded by the identification of "development" with "growth". Such simplification ignores one of the most important aspects of development: welfare improvement for all groups of the population.

2. One of the greatest challenges facing the international community today is to design development so that it satisfies basic human requirements in an environmentally sound way. It is through the development process that man interacts with and affects the natural environment, either positively or negatively. At the same time, natural environment resources of water, soil, plant and animal life constitute the natural capital on which development itself must be based. Good management of the environment is simply a matter of making the best use of nature's resource endowment to meet human needs without destroying the ecological base on which development depends.

3. Several important events that took place in the early 1970s (the Founex Seminar on Development and Environment in 1971; the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment convened in Stockholm in 1972; and the Cocoyoc Symposium on Patterns of Resource Use, Environment and Development Strategies held in Mexico in 1974) began to clarify the links between environment and development and gradually correct the false idea that they were incompatible. The Cocoyoc Symposium (organized by UNEP and UNCTAD) agreed, inter alia, that: (a) economic and social factors are often the root cause of environmental degradation; (b) the basic human needs must be met without impinging upon the outer limits of the carrying capacity of the biosphere; and (c) this generation should have the vision to take account of the needs of future generations and not so preempt the planet's limited resources, and so pollute its life-supporting systems, that the future well-being of man, even his existence, was jeopardized.

4. Since the early 1970s these ideas formed the basis of a wide discussion in international and regional forums. Terms such as "alternative patterns of development", "environmentally sound development", "sustainable development", and others have been used to convey essentially the same message: that environment and development are closely interdependent, and are in fact mutually supportive.

5. Over the past two decades, the concept of sustainable development has been increasingly stressed. Although there are many definitions of that concept (there is no internationally accepted definition of sustainable development, especially a practical definition), there is a general understanding that sustainable development implies: (a) meeting the needs of

the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987); (b) prudent management of available resources and environmental capacities and the rehabilitation of the environment previously subjected to degradation and misuse; (c) although it is important to tackle immediate environmental problems, anticipatory and preventive policies are the most effective and economical in achieving environmentally sound development; and (d) the critical objectives for environment and development policies which follow from the need for sustainable development must include, inter alia, reviving growth and changing its quality, remedying the problems of poverty and the satisfaction of human needs, addressing the problems of population growth and of conserving and enhancing the resource base, re-orienting technology and managing risk and merging environment and economics in decision-making.

6. At the core of the concept of sustainable development is the requirement that current practices should not diminish the possibility of maintaining or improving living standards in the future. In other words, eonomic systems should be managed to maintain or improve the resource and environmental base so that future generations will be able to live equally well or better. This means that the concept of sustainable development raises concern for a new type of fairness and equality rarely considered before, namely "intergenerational equity". This must now take its place among concerns for equality among races, sexes and nations. Achieving the latter forms of equity has proved difficult enough, even though the participants in the struggle have been present and able to fight for their rights. Equity among generations is a more difficult goal, in that unborn generations are not with us to make their concerns known. We living now must represent our descendants' interests for them.

7. The concept of intergenerational equity poses major challenges. It entails three basic principles: (a) each geneation must conserve the diversity of the natural and cultural resource base, so that it does not unduly restrict future generations' options. Each generation is entitled to diversify comparable to past generations; (b) each generation must maintain the quality of the planet so that it is passed on in no worse condition than it was received. Each is entitled to inherit an Earth comparable to the Earth which sustained its forebears; (c) each generation should provide its members with equal rights of access to the legacy from past generations. Thus justice among generations involves both duties and reights, both between generations and members of the same generation, as the third principle makes clear.

II. TOWARDS A PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES (PASDAC)

8. Sustaining human life and well-being requires development and a healthy environment. Development can become difficult to achieve if natural resources are depleted or the environment degraded. Several factors are holding back progress towards sustainable development in the Arab countries:

(a) Deterioration of natural resources, especially of land and water resources, in many countries;

(b) Inadequate consideration of environment in national economic policies and development plans;

(c) Weakness of existing regulatory mechanisms and administrative systems dealing with environmental issues;

(d) Insufficient public awareness about the real causes and magnitude of environmental problems;

(e) Lack of effective public participation in planning, decision-making and implementation of development programmes, environmental protection and conservation measures;

(f) Dependence on curative solutions rather than on anticipation and preventive measures;

(g) Weakness of research institutions, inappropriate research and development programmes, lack of adequately trained manpower and scientific information, and inappropriate transfer of technology;

(h) Instability and frequent military conflicts, which have led to the diversion of astronomical financial resources, of manpower, and of natural resources away from development.

III. MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF ACTION

9. The proposed programme of action for environmentally sound and sustainable development in the Arab countries (PASDAC) has been formulated taking into consideration the different recommendations made at previous relevant regional forums convened in the ESCWA region and in Africa (especially the recommendations of direct relevance to the Arab countries in North Africa). The recommendations of the ESCWA Symposium on Alternative Patterns of Development convened in 1980, of the Workshop on Basic Human Needs in the Arab region organized by ALECSO and UNEP in 1980, of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) convened in Cairo in 1985, and of the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development convened in Tunis in 1986 were particularly taken into consideration.

10. It should be noted that no single blueprint of sustainability can be found, as economic and social systems and ecological conditions differ widely among the Arab countries. Therefore, the present PASDAC provides mainly a general framework, on the basis of which each nation will have to work out its own concrete policy implications. The success of such policy depends to a large extent on several interdependent factors: political will, administrative commitment, appropriate investment, dedicated research and development, and public participation.

11. The following are the main elements that should be taken into account to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development:

(a) The concept of sustainability should be adopted as the goal of national economic and development policy;

(b) National economic policies and decisions on investment should take full account of their impacts on natural resources and environment;

(c) Environmental impact assessment, environmental cost-benefit analyses and other related procedures should be made part of the decision-making process for development projects, transfer of technology, and regulatory measures;

(d) Incentives and disincentives should be introduced to ensure the rational use of natural resources, which consitute the capital on which development depends;

(e) National environmental policies and strategies should emphasize anticipation and prevention;

(f) National environmental institutions should be strengthened and should play a more active role in the decision making process;

(g) Regulatory measures should be formulated in a flexible way and periodically reviewed and updated;

(h) National research and development capacities should be strengthened and should be directed at finding appropriate solutions to contemporary environmental problems and at keeping abreast with emerging environmental issues;

(i) Sustainability is for the people and with the people. Therefore, public awareness and participation should be accorded the highest priority in national development strategies;

(j) The development of national indicators of sustainability should be instituted to monitor the path to sustainable development, resource conservation and environmental protection.

IV. PRIORITY ISSUES

12. As mentioned in the Preface, the General Assembly of the United Nations identified nine environmental issues to be dealt with at the UNCED in 1992. According to para. 12 of GA resolution 44/228, these isues were not listed in any order of priority. By examining these issues and the environmental situation in the Arab countries (see document ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.1), it has been found more approriate to classify these issues into two categories: priority issues, which constitute contemporary and urgent issues for the Arab countries, and "other issues". The priority issues are dealt with first.

1. Land resources

13. The arable and permanent cropland area in the Arab region constitutes only 4 per cent of the total land area. Permanent pastures cover about 22.8 per cent of the land area, and forests and woodlands only 6.6 per cent. Land in the Arab region has been subjected to varying degrees of degradation by different processes. Wind and water erosion are common. But the most serious land modification problems arise from excessive irrigation. Waterlogging,

salinization and sodification are widespread in many countries. Soil degradation has led in some cases to desertification. It has been estimated that about 30 per cent of irrigated land, 60 per cent of rainfed cropland, and about 80 per cent of rangeland are affected by desertification to different degrees. In several Arab countries, agricultural land has been lost to non-agricultural activities due to the lack of appropriate national land use policies. At the same time scarce land resources have been deteriorating, the Arab region has been expanding its imports of food. Today the Arab region has the world's most rapidly growing food deficit, and projections indicate that if current trends prevail, the region will be importing more than half of its needs by the year 2000.

14. Emphasis should, therefore, be given to the following:

(a) National land use plans should be formulated to optimize land use for appropriate development activities and to eliminate any conflicts in land use;

(b) National inventories of soil resources should be assured and periodically updated. Of particular importance is the monitoring of the state of soil resources so that emerging problems can be dealt with in a timely fashion;

(c) The spatial distribution of population should be planned through incentives and disincentives, so that a balance is maintained between population and the local carrying capacity of land;

(d) Regulatory measures, incentives and disincentives should be instituted to ensure that the right of owning agricultural land carry with it an obligation to sustain its productivity;

(e) Efforts should be intensified to rehabilitate degraded agricultural land and areas affected by desertification;

(f) Measures should be taken to rehabilitate degraded rangeland and improve its productivity;

(g) Appropriate agricultural technologies should be adopted to prevent land degradation;

(h) In countries where forests and woodlands constitute an important natural resource, measures should be taken to halt deforestation and improve forest management. Reforestation and afforestation should be undertaken to increase the area of forests;

(i) Agroforestry should receive increasing attention in all Arab countries, as part of rural development and strategies for the development of desert areas;

(j) Research and development activities should be strengthened and priority should be given to joint regional and subregional projects, exchange of experience and scientific information, and training in all areas related to the development and rational use of land resources.

2. Water resources

15. The availability and quality of fresh water are of primary concern, especially to agricultural development in the Arab countries. More than 80 per cent of water withdrawn in 12 Arab countries is used for irrigation. Surface water accounts for 90 per cent of irrigation, and irrigation with groundwater accounts for the remaining 10 per cent. However, groundwater is of primary importance in some countries, for example in the Gulf region and Libya. Water used for irrigation is mostly used inefficiently due to inadequate irrigation technologies and excessive use of water which is almost provided free or very heavily subsidized. This has lead to waterlogging and slainization in many countries. Over-exploitation of groundwater resources in some areas has led to changes in the hydrogeological cycle and intrusion of saline water into aquifers along coastal areas. Because of scarcity of fresh water, there has been a growing tendency in some countries to use water of marginal quality for irrigation. This could lead to negative environmental and health consequences (especially in the case of recycled municipal waters). Apart from agriculture, the provision of safe drinking water for growing population and for industry is posing marked challenges to several countries.

16. Emphasis should, therefore, be given to the following:

(a) Formulation of national strategies for the development of water resources. Such strategies should include the establishment of inventories of water resources, monitoring of the state of such resources, and the use of appropriate water budget models to ensure the rational and non-excessive exploitation of resources;

(b) Legislation and sanctions such as pricing mechanisms, incentives and disincentives should be formulated and implemented to ensure and encourage the efficient use of available water resources, especially in irrigation;

(c) Measures should be taken to improve existing irrigation systems and to use new efficient systems of irrigation;

(d) Public awareness about water scarcity and the necessity of the rational use of water resources should be enhanced;

(e) Groundwater quantity and quality should be monitored. Emerging problems should be identified and dealt with in a timely fashion;

(f) Safe drinking water should be provided to all people by the year 2000, in response to the revised targets of the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade;

(g) Domestic water supply systems must be improved and maintained to reduce losses in transmission;

(h) Measures should be taken to prevent the pollution of surface and groundwater resources from point and non-point sources of pollution;

(i) Environmental impact assessment and cost-benefit analyses must be instituted as part of any water resources development activities;

(j) Research and development should be directed at developing appropriate recycling of wastewater for use in irrigation or industry. The environmental and health aspects of such water reuse must be thoroughly evaluated;

(k) Joint programmes at the subregional and regional levels should be established for education, training and research in water management, water pollution control and wastewater recycling;

(l) Joint programmes and action plans should be established at the subregional level to promote the appropriate management of shared surface and groundwater resources.

3. Marine environment and coastal areas

17. Most marine pollution in the Arab countries originates from shipping and from the discharge of municipal wastewater and industrial effluents into the sea. Most seas in the area (the Gulf, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean) are semi-enclosed seas. This renders them more vulnerable to the effects of discharges than the open ocean. The effects of pollution on marine biota are already manifest in some areas. Fisheries, coral reefs and other biota in the Gulf, the Red Sea and in the Mediterranean have been affected to different degrees. The lack of coastal zone management in most Arab countries and the increase in the establishment of industries and tourist resorts in coastal areas have already created problems of marine pollution and the deterioration of coastal ecosystems.

18. Emphasis should, therefore, by given to the following:

(a) The formulation and application of environmentally sound tools and strategies for the devlopment of coastal areas and maritime activities;

(b) Monitoring and assessment of the different sources, levels and effects of marine pollution;

(c) The dumping of hazardous wastes (especially those containing heavy metals and persistent organic and organometallic compounds) into the marine environment must be banned;

(d) Alternatives for the discharge of other wastes, especially sewage, should be evaluated and given priority. Wastes that should be discharged into the marine environment must be adequately treated prior to discharge;

(e) The ecological effects of wastes discharged into the marine environment should be monitored;

(f) Measures to mitigate the effects of marine pollution should be established, including special measures and emergency plans to deal with pollution emergencies;

(g) The formulation and implementation of environmentally sound plans for the rational exploitation of living marine resources;

(h) Introduction of legal and administrative and fiscal policies to stimulate the protection of the marine environment, coastal ecosystems, and the exploitation of living marine resources;

(i) National research and development institutions should be strengthened and their programmes should be oriented towards providing a better understanding of the state of the national marine environment, its ecology, and monitoring to deal with emerging problems in a timely fashion;

(j) Because the seas in the Arab countries are shared by several countries, broader adherence to the existing regional agreements and strict application of their provisions would contribute considerably to the protection of the marine and coastal environment;

(k) Efforts should be strengthened to accelerate the implementation of the plans of action for the protection of the marine environment, already adopted for the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and the Gulf (the Kuwait Action Plan).

(l) Whenever appropriate, existing agreements should be expanded or adapted to the changing needs of the countries concerned, and additional agreements should be adopted to regulate subjects not covered by existing agreements.

4. Rural and urban development

19. A common feature of population distribution in the Arab countries is the high rate of urbanization in most countries. High-income countries are already above 80 per cent urban. By 2020, many middle-income and some low-income countries will have more than 60 per cent of their population living in urban areas. Rural-urban migration has exacerbated the already dire conditions in many urban areas and has contributed to the deterioration of the rural resoure base through increased neglect of land. Migration has been triggered by poor living conditions in most rural areas, by unrewarding returns from agriculture and by deteriorating environmental conditions. Most urban centres in the Arab countries have already reached their carrying capacity and offer very limited opportunities for employment. Excesive rural-urban migration has, therefore, led to the proliferation of squatter settlements, with all the associated environmental and social problems. This trend will continue in the future unless the rural-urban migration is halted and, in soma cases, reversed through incentives and disincentives.

20. Emphasis should, therefore, be given to the following:

(a) Governments tend to be too preoccupied with placating dominant urban interests to commit adequate resources to the development of the rural sector. A balance should be maintained between urban and rural development strategies;

(b) The symbiosis between agricultural and rural development and national economic growth must be fully appreciated;

(c) Agricultural policies should shift from a goal of maximizing production in the short term to a perspective of sustainability of production. Sustainable agricultural development should aim at meeting the perceived needs of all people, especially the rural poor, and improving the quality of life in rural areas;

(d) Agrarian reform should be designed and implemented to improve the quality of life of small farmers;

(e) Pricing policies and mechanisms should provide realistic and stable returns to farmers, in order to reduce risk and uncertainty and encourage investment in farm improvement;

(f) Eradication of illiteracy in rural areas is of primary importance to achieve sustainable rural development;

(g) Rural development including natural resources management and provision of drinking water and sanitation should receive systematic attention in public policies. Governments should design and implement, with the participation of the communities concerned, integrated programmes to improve water supply and management, sanitation and waste disposal;

(h) Efforts should be made to strengthen the provision of primary health care to rural areas;

(i) Research and development should be oriented towards solving problems pertaining to sustainable rural development. Of primary importance is the development of appropriate and environmentally sound technologies to provide rural areas with sources of energy, shelter and basic services and appropriate rural industries;

(j) Public awareness in rural areas of the different environmental problems, of the importance of natural resources conservation, and of the benefits of rational use of resources, is fundamental in the implementation of any strategy to achieve rural development;

(k) Public participation at all stages of planning, decision-making and management is indispensable for achieving integration of the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable rural development. The role of women must be emphasized at all these stages;

(l) Environmentally sound urban planning should receive priority attention in human settlements strategies;

(m) Urban centres should systematically provide areas to meet the needs of various income categories, for industry, business, recreation and open spaces;

(n) Efforts should be intensified to improve the present environmental conditions of urban areas, in particular air quality, municipal waste management, problems of transportation, traffic management, water supply and housing conditions;

(o) Accelerated efforts should be made to rehabilitate squatter settlements and prevent their illegal proliferation;

(p) Public awareness and participation should be strengthened to improve urban environmental conditions;

5. Waste Management

21. All human activities generate wastes. The collection and disposal of such wastes present different technical as well as management challenges. Although some of the wastes can be recycled or used as raw material for energy (e.g. agricultural residues in rural areas) or for the manufacture of certain products, other wastes cannot be recycled with available technology, or economically. Such wastes should be treated and/or disposed of safely. Certain wastes, generated mainly by industry, are defined as hazardous wastes and pose special problems for their disposal. The amounts of hazardous wastes generated in the Arab countries are not known at present, but are on the rise with increasing industrialization. Because of the limited land areas available for disposal of waste in some developed countries, there has been a tendency in recent years to export hazardous wastes for disposal in Third World countries. Some of the Arab countries were not immune to attempts for such dumping of hazardous wastes.

22. Because of the serious environmental and health consequences that can occur due to the inadequate disposal of wastes, emphasis should be given to the following:

(a) Waste prevention or reduction is the best way to protect the environment. Strategies should be developed and implemented to reduce waste generation;

(b) Appropriate technologies, incentives and regulatory measures should be developed to maximize recycling and re-use of reclaimable wastes;

(c) Wastes to be disposed of should be treated to the level at which they could be safely released into the environment;

(d) Appropriate technologies should be developed for the safe storage of wastes that cannot be treated and disposed of. The storage sites should be adequately designed and should be carefully monitored;

(e) Research and development programmes should be oriented towards the improvement of existing waste management technologies and the development of new environmentally sound and appropriate technologies;

(f) National inventories of the types of wastes generated and disposal and storage sites should be established and kept under review and updating;

(g) Regulations, incentives and disincentives should be formulated and implemented as part of waste management strategies;

(h) Public awareness and participation should be enhanced to reduce waste generation and to cooperate in waste management practices;

(i) Transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes should be banned;

6. Human health and well-being

23. Despite considerable advances in dealing with problems of health in some Arab countries, the environmental basis for further improving the situation is deteriorating. Inadequate shelter and basic amenities, rural underdevelopment, over-crowded cities and urban decay, lack of access to clean water, poor sanitation and other environmental deficiencies continue to cause widespread disease and death, ill-health and intolerable living conditions in several parts of the Arab region. Poverty, malnutrition and ignorance compound these problems.

24. Emphasis should, therefore, be given to the following:

(a) Population policies must have a broader focus than just controlling numbers of people. Public awareness of the significance of population planning for improving health and the quality of life should be strengthened;

(b) Commitment and sensitivity are needed to overcome the array of social and technical obstacles that face effective family planning;

(c) Efforts should be intensified to improve primary health services and maternal and child health care;

(d) Health should not be regarded as a "service", but rather as an "investment", and should be an integral part of national development plans and strategies;

(e) The control and eradication of environmental diseases, such as schistosomiasis and malaria, should be given priority;

(f) Development projects, especially those that may generate environment diseases, should be assessed for their health impacts and measures should be introduced to prevent or reduce these impacts;

(g) Public awareness in rural areas should be enhanced about environmental diseases and about the health risks of irrational use of agrochemicals, as part of preventive measures;

(h) Standards for air and water quality should be formulated and adhered to through regulatory measures;

(i) Occupational health standards should be formulated, implemented and carefully monitored;

(j) National inventories of chemicals produced and used should be established and should be screened for their toxicity and carcinogenicity;

(k) Food should be carefully examined for food contaminants and international standards applied for food safety;

(i) Efforts should be intensified to provide all people with safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by they year 2000;

(m) Because lead has proved to cause health hazards among children, lead in gasoline should be phased out as soon as feasible, but not later than 1995;

(n) Indoor air pollution is becoming hazardous in urban and rural areas. Studies should be carried out to assess the different sources of such pollution and way and means for its reduction.

V. OTHER ISSUES

25. Three other issues remain from the nine issues decided upon by the General Assembly in resolution 44/228. These are discussed in the following, together with the relevant subjects referred to at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for UNCED, convened in August 1990.

1. Biological diversity

26. Biological resources are the basis of human life. Biological diversity is being reduced through inappropriate human activities. The continued erosion of biological resources poses serious implications for agriculture, medicine and industry; in fact for human welfare and his very existence. Some animal and plant species have disappeared from some Arab countries due to the destruction of their habitat, pollution (as, for example, the extinction of some birds as a result of excessive use of pesticides), over-exploitation, or the introduction of exotic species (for example, the loss of gene pools as a result of introduction of imported high-yield wheat and rice varieties). The time has come to appreciate biological resources as assets that should be conserved and managed for the benefit of the present and future generations.

27. Emphasis should, therefore, be given to the following:

(a) National research institutions should intensify efforts to establish inventories and maps of indigenous plant and animal species;

(b) Establishment of national gene banks to foster the preservation of indigenous crops and wild plants;

(c) Establishment of adequate protected areas to protect and develop threatened species.

2. Biotechnology

28. Recent advances in biotechnology research and development offer new possibilities for increasing the production of food, medicines, energy, especiality chemicals and other raw materials and improving environmental management. However, because biotechnology is extensively dominated by private sector research and development in industrialized countries, the transfer of such technologies to Third World countries will be complicated and costly. Biotechnology can have several impacts on the environment; our knowledge of these impacts is still in its infancy.

29. Emphasis should, therefore, be given to the following:

(a) National research and development capabilities in the areas of biotechnology should be strengthened;

(b) National capabilities for the screening of transferred biotechnologies should be established;

(c) Mechanisms should be established to ensure favourable access to and transfer of relevant biotechnologies to enhance, in particular, agricultural development;

(d) Full access to information on the environmental impacts of imported biotechnologies must be assured.

3. Global atmoshperic issues

30. The Arab countries do not manufacture chlorofluorocarbons which are responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer. Imported chlorofluorocarbons are used, however, in the manufacture of some equipment and are imported within manufactured goods (e.g. air conditioners..etc). As of 31 December 1990, seven Arab countries have signed the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer- which came into force on 1 January 1989. These countries are: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and UAE.

31. The recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which were submitted to the World Climate Conference in 1990 indicate that the increase in the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere will increase global mean temperature by about 0.3 degree C per decade during the next century. This will result a likely increase in global mean temperature of about 1 degree C above the present value by 2025, and 3 degrees C before the end of the next century. Such global warming is predicted to affect agriculture, water resources and increase sea level, with potential economic and social consequences. None of the Arab countries is among the 20 countries responsible for the bulk emissions of greenhouse gases in the world. Negotiations are under way to prepare an international convention on global warming. Some of the Arab countries are following such negotiations.

32. Although the problem of transboundary air pollution is not relevant in all the Arab region at present, it may be of importance on a subregional level. The problem should, therefore, be evaluated and adequate agreements and regulatory measures formulated.

4. Transfer of Technology

33. Many examples exist of the inadequacy of technologies transferred in some sectors. In fact some of these technologies have had negative consequences and have undermined the objectives for which they were transferred. The challenge is not to transfer a carbon copy of foreign technology, but to adapt such technology to local conditions. Although the concept of sustainable development should be based on increased self-reliance, transfer of technology will continue to be of primary importance in the Arab countries.

34. Emphasis should, therefore, be given to the following:

(a) National institutions, manpower and mechanisms for technology assessment should be strengthened;

(b) Regulatory measures should be instituted to introduce technology assessment as a precondition for technology transfer;

(c) The environmental impacts of any technology to be transferred should be thoroughly examined;

(d) Research and development should be intensified to develop appropriate and environmentally sound indigenous technologies to achieve sustainable development, thereby increasing self-reliance.

5. Financial resources

35. A programme of action to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development requires massive financial resources and close cooperation between the Arab countries. The problems in any single country are, in most cases, beyond the capability of that country to solve. Although several mechanisms exist on a regional and subregional level functioning in the fields of environmental development and natural resources, there is real need for coordination among there mechanisms to achieve better performance. In the field of enhancing available financial resources to the Arab countries, including ESCWA member states, regional and international cooperation should be strengthened in implementing regional environmental projects; training man power in this regard; and allocating financial resources, regionally and internationally in views of implementing the projects of the programme of action adopted by the Conference; and encouraging the creditor countries to allocate part of their receivables from some Arab countries for the improvement and protection of the environment.

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES PROPOSED IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES (E/ESCWA/ENVHS/1991/WP.2B)

I. INTRODUCTION

As an embodiment of joint Arab action in the field of environment and development and in order to support present and future efforts made by Arab countries in preserving the basic environmental components and rationalizing the use of resources and in order to coordinate regional, subregional and bilateral programmes as well as international coperation programmes in the field of environment, the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development discussed a number of joint operational programmes which can be implemented among concerned Arab countries in cooperation with international, regional and subregional oganization concerned with environment and development issues. These programmes constitute a general framework for the implementation of priority projects on the understanding that the operational steps for the projects agreed upon, the means of financing such projects and their budgets would be determined at a later stage. Therefore, the proposed projects represent a general framework for cooperation in joint operational projects.

II. PRIORITY OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES PROPOSED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE CONTEXT OF JOINT ARAB ACTION IN COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES CONCERNED WITH ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

First Project: Rationalization of water utilization in the Arab World

Objectives of the project

- To preserve water resources from pollution;
- To rationalize water utilization in agriculture, industry and other purposes;
- To support joint water quality control programmes;
- To train specialized personnel in natural water resources management;
- To develop the institutional structures concerned with water resources management.

Operational programme

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Training courses in monitoring water resources, related laws and legislations and shared natural water resources management;
- Preparation and development of joint plans for the protection of groundwater, surfacewater and seawater resources;

- Initiating arrangements for the establishment of an Arab network for water resources management and information exchange in this field.

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Establishment of subregional bodies for shared water resources;

- Preparation and implementation of specific programmes for environmental assessment studies of major water projects in some Arab countries;

- Assessment of environmental and health implications of water supply projects in rural and urban areas.

Second project: Rationalization of energy sources utilization

Objectives of the project

- To assist Arab countries in preparing and promoting national programmes for rationalizing energy utilization, supporting institutional structures and training a specialized work force in the field of conventional and renewable sources of energy;

- To coordinate programmes and activities on the regional and subregional levels to strengthen cooperation in shared energy resources management;

- To assess the environmental impact of energy uses in Arab countries.

Operational programme

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Updating energy balances for production, consumption and reserve in Arab countries;

- Supporting integrated projects for the use of energy within the context of protecting ecological systems;

- Developing appropriate and environmentally sound technologies for the various energy uses, especially in rural areas;

- Implementing field projects related to rationalizing energy utilization with the possibility of using available substitutes.

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Preparing and implementing studies concerned with the assessment of the environmental impact of energy production and utilization projects, especially in environmentally-sensitive areas;

- Preparing studies on the environmental and health implications of pan-Arab energy projects such as the linking of electricity grids;

- Introducing clean and environmentally sound energy technologies, especially in the field of transport.

Third project: Sustainable and environmentally-sound industrial development

Objectives of the project

- To prepare and support national programmes for environmentally-sound industrial development;

- To seek to introduce clean technologies which suit the economic conditions and industrial potential in Arab countries;

- To support Arab cooperation in technology transfer and environmental management in large-scale industrial complexes;

- To support joint efforts for the management and systematic disposal of hazardous wastes;

- To support international efforts aimed at protecting the environment from industrial pollutants.

Operational programme

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Preparing an Arab map of industrial activities and their geographical distribution; and assessing the sources of pollution resulting therefrom;

- Supporting integrated industrial development programmes producing little pollution;

- Supporting applied research programmes for industrial wastes treatment and developing environmentally acceptable production methods;

- Implementing training programmes for the environmental management in industry and for the treatment of toxic and hazardous industrial wastes.

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Preparing and implementing studies to assess the environmental impact of industrial sites and production projects in large industrial centres;

- Assessing the environmental and health impacts of small and medium scale industrial projects in urban areas;

- Implementing joint projects for the re-use of by-products of industry and consumed intermediate substances;

- Preparing an Arab information network on clean technology, regulations and laws on industrial waste disposal and available substitutes for the re-use of industrial waste.

Fourth project: Food security and sustainable and environmentally sound agricultural development

Objectives of the project

- To assist Arab countries in developing agricultural development programmes and developing human capabilities in the fields of agricultural research and production on environmentally sound bases;

- To coordinate joint Arab efforts aimed at rationalizing the use of agricultural chemicals and study their long-term health and environmental impact;

- To support national plans for combating desertification and protecting the soil.

Operational programme

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Training programmes for the preparation of qualified personnel in the optimum use of agricultural chemicals and insecticides and means of protecting the soil;

- Supporting on-going efforts and sub-regional programmes for combating desertification; as well as supporting projects related to arid and semi-arid lands;

- Preparing and implementing joint programmes on the use of biotechnology in developing agricultural crops and protecting them from agricultural pests.

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Preparing an Arab agricultural map showing the geographical distribution of crops, livestock, pastures and forests in the Arab world;

- Conducting studies on nutritional patterns in the Arab world and improving food quality as a means to achieving food sufficiency;

- Implementing joint projects for the integration of agricultural production patterns in the Arab world; to ensure that they are environmentally sound and achieve long-term objectives in the field of Arab food security;

- Preparing and implementing studies to assess the environmental impact of large-scale agricultural development projects as well as irrigation and agricultural drainage projects;

- Implementing projects for insecticide substiutes to combat agricultural pests and use biotechnology in producing pest-resistant food crops.

Fifth project: Human Settlements and their impact on the environment

Objectives of the project

- To assess the impact of rapid population growth on environmental services and population basic needs;

- To study the relationship between urban planning and environmental components in urban communities;

- To study scientific means of upgrading services in marginal squatter settlements

- To strengthen reverse migration as a means to develop rural communities.

Operational programme

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Studying appropriate ways of including environmental costs in the economic feasibility elements of public service projects;

- Assessing demographical studies and strategies for population redistribution, and developing methods for the assessment of the environmental impact of population growth;

- Developing local government programmes and institutional structures of environmental management in large cities;

- Implementing personnel training courses in environmental management in human settlements;

- Conducting studies to develop operational regulations and laws related to environmental protection in human settlements.

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Implementing applied programmes in some selected human settlements as an example of decentralized environmental management;

- Exchanging expertise among Arab cities on a systematic basis to communicate pioneer experiments concerning sound environmental management and the management of environmental facilities in Arab cities;

- Preparing and implementing some pilot projects in the fields of environmental sanitation and the development of indigenous capabilities so as to improve environmenal conditions in rural communities.

Sixth project: Population planning and public health services

Objectives of the project

- To support studies and research in population planning in Arab States;
- To assess population growth patterns in human settlements under various conditions in some Arab cities, and the impact of such patterns on the environment and public health;
- To support popular involvement and promote the efforts of non-governmental organizations in family planning and local environment development;
- To support governmental efforts and regional organizations programmes concerned with population planning and public health.

Operational programme

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Preparing a population manual on social characteristics, demographic data, environmental conditions and public health conditions in human settlements in Arab countries;
- Preparing comparative studies on the categories most prone to illness under specified environmental conditions in some human settlements;
- Assessing the impact of health and environmental services on population growth;
- Studying the relationship between health patterns and varying capabilities of social categories with various income levels and the impact of technological innovations on public health.

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Preparing and implementing studies to assess the health impact of development projects in urban communities;
- Studying and promoting the role of women in family planning, primary health care and the promotion of environmental awareness;
- Preparing long-term epidemiological studies on the impact of pollutants on public health and maximum exposure levels in Arab countries in keeping with the special circumstances and living conditions of the citizens of these countries.

Seventh project: Integrating environmental considerations in national development planning

Objectives of the project

- To integrate environmental considerations in national development policies;

- To ensure the integration of policy tools such as tax policy, financial incentives, urban planning and designation of industrial sites within the context of an integrated and sustainable development policy;

- To strengthen institutional capabilities in research and development in the field of designing national development plans as well as in the field of developing manpower concerned with planning sustainable development and environment programmes;

- To improve the institutional structures of the executive management in order to enhance integrated policies for sustainable development.

Operational programmes

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Assisting concerned Arab countries in preparing development plans based on integrating environmental dimension;

- Implementing human development programmes in the fields of planning, strategy preparation and assessing the implementation of environmental development plans;

- Preparing studies on the economic and environmental costs of the depletion of natural resources in national income accounts;

- Preparing and implementing programmes for conducting national awareness campaigns in fields related to protecting the environment and rationalizing the use of resources.

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Preparing integrated conceptual studies to identify the relationship between man, development, resources and the environment, as well as the impact of political and economic systems and income and cultural level on these relations in selected Arab countries;

- Assessing production and consumption patterns in abundance societies and scarcity societies with a view to formulating an environmental code of conduct suitable for Arab societies.

Eighth project: An Arab network for environmental monitoring

Objectives of the project

- To enhance the exchange of environmental information among Arab countries;

- To establish an environmental information bank and a data base to provide inputs for environmental studies in various fields;

- To promote the integration of joint environmental programmes and support operational projects in the fields of emergency plans, exchange of secondary materials and expertise in clean technology applications;

- To prepare an information data base on environmental laws and legislations with a view to using it in programmes aimed at developing and standardizing environmental laws in the Arab world.

Operational programmes

(a) Short-term phase (3 to 5 years)

- Assisting concerned Arab countries in establishing and developing national information banks and preparing a standardized method for the environmental data base;

- Assisting Arab countries through specific projects with a view to preparing a data base on environmental monitoring;

- Implementing regional programmes to develop manpower in the field of environmental monitoring;

- Preparing standardized systems for the assessment and induction of environmental information;

- Preparing standardized analytical methods related to the environmental monitoring of water, air, soil and marine life in the Arab countries, and assessing the quality of environment, and submitting periodical reports on the findings;

(b) Long-term phase (5 to 10 years)

- Preparing and implementing an Arab network for environmental information to be fed from the above-mentioned national networks;

- Connecting the Arab environmental monitoring network with similar environmental networks in United Nations organizations and concerned international bodies;

- Using the environmental information network in preparing and developing an environmental Atlas of the Arab world and in preparing periodical reports on environmental conditions in the Arab world.

III. OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF SECONDARY PRIORITY PROPOSED FOR IMPLEMENTATION ON BILATERAL AND SUBREGIONAL ARAB LEVELS AND IN COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL FINANCING BODIES

(a) To prepare methodically standardized periodical national profiles on the state of the environment.

(b) To support international and regional programmes for environmental action such as:

- Water resources and marine life protection;
- Studies on climatic changes and the depletion of the ozone layer;
- Agreements on the transport of dangerous materials across the borders;
- Agreements on the preservation of biological diversity.

(c) To develop mineral resources and rationalize their use on an environmental basis.

(d) To support the role of non-governmental institutions in the field of environmental work.

(e) To promote the role of science and technology in developing an environmentally sound technology suiting the economic and social conditions in Arab countries.

(f) To prepare and implement plans for the establishment of natural preserves and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas such as pastures, forests, and species threatened with extinction.

(g) To introduce environmental sciences in pre-university education.

(h) To implement joint programmes for the protection of the environment in oil exploration and extraction areas, especially in ecologically sensistive areas.

(i) To assess the impact of the programmes aimed at restructuring economic systems, proposed by the International Monetary Fund, on environmental development projects in some Arab countries.

(j) To assess programmes for reverse migration from cities to rural areas and policies for establishing new cities and developing rural areas including their infrastructure, and assessing the impact thereof on environment and development.

(k) To draw up a code of conduct for the preservation of resources and the environment from the negative impact of disputes between States.

Annex 3

ARAB DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS AS ADOPTED BY THE ARAB MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (CAIRO, 10-12 SEPTEMBER 1991)

We the Arab Ministers of the Environment representing Arab States which cover an area of not less than 14 million square kilometer situated in Asia and Africa, with human resources exceeding 220 millions, diversified natural resources in sea and land and abundant sources of renewable energy (solar energy) and non-renewable energy (oil and natural gas); those countries which have made to civilization and to scientific advancement a contribution that has been consistent with the safeguarding, conservation and protection of the environment:

Recalling the 1972 Stockholm Declaration on Human Environment, emphasizing and renewing our commitment to its principles related to the protection and improvement of the environment at the international level in a spirit of cooperation among all peoples,

Reaffirming the environment principles and policies stated in the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development (1986),

Taking into account United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/228 concerning the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which referred to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and stressing the importance of Arab States participation in this Conference, based on the conviction that sustainable development is an important means for the protection of the region's resources for present and future generations,

Stressing the unique character of the Arab region which was, and still is, the cradle of civilizations and heavenly religions which make man and the environment subject of attention, as well as stressing the common heritage and history, and the homogenous geographical extension with mutual effects on the natural environment as a result of development and human activities,

Recognizing that the conservation of the environment necessitates the elimination of basic constraints namely poverty, ignorance and disease, and stressing therefore the need for promoting the efforts aimed at reducing the developmental gap between the industrialized and developing countries,

Deeply concerned at the persistence of serious environmental risks in the region due to the outbreak of wars, armed conflicts, and tensions arising from the failure to find a just solution to the Palestinian question, which impedes development, damages resources and increases environmental degradation, and stressing the need for an urgent international solution to these problems,

Stressing also that any measure or incidents in one country or region should not jeopardize the environment of other countries or regions, and that the damage resulting from such incidents as nuclear tests should be the responsibility of the countries where they originate,

Welcoming the regional conventions and related protocols for the protection and safeguarding of marine environment in the Gulf, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, as a comprehensive legal and cooperative framework for the protection of marine environment at the regional level,

Expressing our satisfaction for the accession of certain Arab States to international conventions such as the Vienna Convention, the Montreal Protocol on the Ozone Layer, the Basel Convention on the Movement of Dangerous Wastes Across the Borders, and the regional conventions related to the environment,

Expressing our determination to secure the continuation of the harmonious relations between the Arab people and their environment.

1. Declare our commitment to undertake individually and collectively to achieve sustainable development and to meet the needs of present generations without detriment to the rights of future generations, through Arab environmental cooperation programmes, and particularly, by making every possible effort with a view to:

- Encouraging equitable participation in sustainable and environmentally sound development;

- Minimizing harmful environmental impacts on economic developments through the integration of environmental considerations in the planning process and in the economic and sectoral policies;

- Drawing up policies for the use of materials and development planning based on the preventive principle;

- Contributing to the international efforts aimed at solving the urgent environmental problems at the International level.

2. Decide to work individually and collectively in order to:

- Ensure the use and conservation of land, marine and fresh water resources in an environmentally sustainable way;

- Preserve the biological diversity of the region and protect the critical environmental systems;

- Assess the environmental impact of development projects, making it an integral part of feasibility studies;

- Limit pollution caused by wastes and treat and manage such wastes.

3. Recognize the importance of socio-economic factors in the activities of natural resources management through:

- Adopting a demographic policy and encouraging consumption patterns, which promote sustainable development;

- Increasing public awareness and understanding of the environmental and cultural heritage, through scientific research, educational and training programmes, and dissemination of information; and encouraging the community, particularly women, to adopt positive attitudes towards the environment;

- Facilitating the adaptation of appropriate technology at acceptable cost, in addition to developing human resources, skills, training, research, and information;

- Ensuring the effective use of financial resources allocated from national budgets and international sources for the protection of the environment and the achievement of environmentally sustainable development in the region;

- Integrating health and food considerations in development planning;

- Intensifying the private sector contribution to the achievement of environmentally sustainable development.

4. Affirm the right of individuals and non-governmental organizations to be seized of, and have access to information on environmental issues of interest to them, and to participate in the formulation and implementation of decisions with potential effect on their environment.

5. Express our commitment to take collective necessary measures to develop the legal framework for the protection of the environment, to implement relevant regional agreements and to further promote regional and national capabilities with a view to achieving sustainable development.

6. Call upon the International community to respect the right of the Arab people, as custodian of their environment, to protect their own natural resources for the present and future generations.

7. Call upon the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to take fully into consideration various concerns expressed in the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development and Future Prospects at its fourth session to be held in New York.

8. Further call upon the Preparatory Committee to give priority to environmental projects with direct and immediate impact on development, in particular, those projects related to the life and future of the Arab people. This can be achieved through:

I. PROPER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND DEVELOPMENT

In order to meet the basic needs of a community, provide welfare to the citizens, enhance the feeling of belonging and constructive interaction with the environment, sustainable development should be ensured through:

(a) Encouraging projects which involve rational use of natural resources and less harm to the environment;

(b) Supporting family planning programmes to control population growth, taking into account mother and child health;

(c) Promoting self capabilities in providing wider employment opportunities throughout the Arab world, and developing the necessary skills for its present and future needs;

(d) Adopting the principle of environmental impact assessment in development projects, including the economic aspects, as part of feasibility studies of such projects; and linking the approval of development projects to the adherence to apply the results of the environmental assessment, in order to ensure project's harmonization with the environmental considerations.

II. PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT

Taking necessary measures to promote methods and systems of local environment management through:

(a) Integrating environmental costs in production costs and feasibility studies;

(b) Limiting the use of installations and products with harmful environmental impacts and increasing investments in rural and marginal population centres in peripheral areas;

(c) Studying the possibility of imposing taxes on sources of pollution to encourage the reduction of pollutants and using such revenue to increase governmental investment in programmes dealing with pollution and environmental degradation;

(d) Developing administrative institutions entrusted with the preparation and implementation of environmental conservation programmes. Revising, updating and standardizing environment legislation in such a way as to meet the actual needs and ensure a balance between environment and development;

(e) Encouraging the establishment of local institutions for the implementation of environment protection programmes in urban communities and industrial cities. Securing the financial and administrative autonomy of the institutions and coordinating their relations with the local administration and central authorities in the country;

III. DEVELOPING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Developing urban and rural environment through:

(a) Encouraging the least costly and most effective environment services programmes to meet public needs while relying on indigenous capabilities;

(b) Promoting the use of local materials and appropriate technologies in construction methods and encouraging the adoption of low cost nucleas housing;

(c) Taking the necessary measures to control the noise pollution and emissions by vehicles and encourage public transport;

(d) Implementing special measures to deal with the environmental impacts of development in various economic sectors;

(e) Encouraging waste recycling projects;

(f) Giving priority to the implementation of sewerage projects in the densly populated areas and to the development of low cost technologies for sewerage treatment;

(g) Devoting attention to the environmental degradation and to its negative impacts on the resources and living conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories as a result of Israeli arbitrary practices.

IV. DEVELOPING WATER AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Using all possible means to conserve and develop water and agricultural resources; to control the urban sprawl and the use of pesticides, through:

(a) Establishing an integrated Arab plan for environmental monitoring, including water monitoring, and follow up on water discharge and flood and torrents predictions;

(b)Promoting studies to update information on groundwater basins, identify the quantity and quality of their water content and establish integrated environmental plans for its use;

(c) Developing water resources to meet the increasing needs of agricultural, industrial and urban development;

(d) Using modern irrigation methods through which the use of fresh water can be rationalized; and encouraging investment in the production of such methods at low cost;

(e) Restructuring crop cycles in irrigation projects which lack sufficient water resources;

(f) Implementing programmes for the treatment of sewage and industrial waste before discharge in water sources; recycling such waste whenever possible, and encouraging low cost technologies to this end.

V. COMBATING DESERTIFICATION AND DEVELOPING AL-BADIA (ARID) AREAS

Promoting national, regional and international efforts for combating desertification and developing al-Badia areas through:

(a) Increasing the area of cultivated land. Promoting and encouraging the regional projects of green belts in North Africa, Badiat- al-Sham (the Syrian Desert), the Arab Peninsula and the African Horn desert areas.

(b) Developing al-Badia areas; encouraging environmental and development support programmes; providing incentives for grazing areas development projects in the Arab world in such a way as to achieve ecological balance in these sensitive areas.

VI. USES OF ENERGY

The Arab countries, being major producers of fossil energy, and, though recognizing the increased demand for this resource of energy despite the resulting depletion of such resource and the negative environmental impacts due, in particular, to the consumption of energy, call upon the developed countries, as major consumers of energy, to take into consideration the dimensions of this problem. They also call upon these countries to increase their contribution to the provision of appropriate techniques and financial resources in order to contain the negative aspects of the problem and achieve an optimal use of various sources of energy. They will thus fulfil the developmental aspirations of the developing countries and enable them to meet the environmental requirements, while seeking to:

(a) Increase investments for diversifying all sources of safe energy and environmentally improving the quality of products thereof;

(b) Implement programmes and policies which prove to be effective in increasing the efficiency of the present sources of energy;

(c) Use available technologies and develop appropriate new ones to increase operation efficiency in production, distribution and consumption sites;

(d) Accelerate the implementation of on-going projects in connecting electric grids; updating studies on other pan Arab electric connections and assessing environmental, cost and health implications.

VII. MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Continuing industrial development as a major prerequisite for economic and social progress in the Arab countries. Efforts should be made with a view to:

(a) Expanding the introduction of clean and safe technologies;

(b) Devoting attention to secondary materials and waste recycling projects; and giving a new impetus to the possible exchange of secondary materials on the regional level, to be re-processed and used as production inputs;

(c) Intensifying the efforts of environmental legislative and executive organs in order to develop the industrial environment management systems and the studies conducted to assess the environmental impact of various projects, in order to ensure sustainable development;

(d) Promoting environmentally sound management of hazardous chemicals, and improving the control and training; formulating plans to cope with disasters resulting from spills or leakage of such chemicals during use, transport or storage; establishing records for these wastes and materials; also establishing national data base to be linked to the international network of information bank;

(e) Emphasizing the need for establishing constructive international cooperation within the framework of the Basel Convention, taking into account the need to develop this convention so as to include the views and requirements of the developing countries which seek to avoid the risks resulting from the transport and disposal of such wastes.

VIII. PROTECTION OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Supporting the efforts of the States to conserve and develop the marine life; preparing environmentally appropriate programmes and methods to develop the coastal areas and marine activities through:

(a) Preparing environmentally sound programmes and methods for the development of coastal areas and the promotion of maritime activities;

(b) Supporting the efforts for the environment protection and preservation included in maritime and coastal areas development programmes, especially those areas of sensitive environments;

(c) Calling upon all countries to sign International agreements on marine environment and to participate in implementing plans aimed at eliminating the sources of pollution in sea and on coasts;

(d) Urging the international community to prepare plans for avoiding the disasters which threat the marine life, and for dealing with these disasters once they occur.

IX. EDUCATION AND THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE AND RARE NATURAL RESOURCES

(a) Integrating the environmental dimension in the educational curricula and programmes at all levels and stages;

(b) Encouraging inventory projects of rare natural resources and establishing protected natural sites;

(c) Contributing to international and regional efforts aimed at protecting rare natural species;

(d) Supporting plans and projects aimed at preserving and protecting the natural heritage from harmful environmental impacts.

X. INCREASING POPULAR INVOLVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES:

It is important that popular involvement should receive the attention it deserves through:

(a) Involving individuals, local bodies and non- governmental institutions in following-up the implementation of the environmental protection projects as well as the integrated development projects while extending necessary support.

(b) Emphasizing the role of Arab women in environmental protection, so as to ensure sound environmental education for future generations.

XI. STRENGTHENING ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:

A. At the Arab level

1. To support Arab environmental institutions and organs including the Council of Arab Ministers on Environmental and its sub-committees, environmental organs in Arab Organizations and Regional Cooperation Councils.

2. To support regional plans for the protection of the marine environment, including the Kuwait Plan of Action; the Mediterranean Sea Plan, the Emergency Plans for Oil Spills and similar other plans.

3. To coordinate cooperation with organizations concerned with the financing of environmental projects.

4. To identify Arab environmental information networks and to prepare an Arab programme on linking such networks with each other and with the international networks.

B. At the international level

1. To commend the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting International environmental activities since the Stockholm Conference and to emphasize the basic role of this programme in following-up and implementing the resolutions of the Brazil 1992 Conference, (Earth Summit) in addition to following-up international agreements to be reached on issues submitted to the Conference and, to this end, increasing its financial resources.

2. To promote cooperation with the United Nations organizations concerned with environmental issues, in particular, the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab region and Europe (CEDARE), as a pilot centre for establishing similar centres in other parts of the world.

3. To participate actively in international environmental activities, in the international conventions on the use of resources and the reduction of pollution across the countries and the preservation of the quality of the environment, and to cooperate with international programmes for the monitoring of the environment.

XII. PROVIDING FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PROJECTS

The Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development recalls the various international initiatives related to the financing of international, regional and national projects for preserving the equilibrium between the environment and development, made by the Financial Funds and environmental preservation projects. The Conference also recalls the decision of the major industrial countries to receive part of their debts in local currency and to allocate such amounts to finance environmental protection projects.

The Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, welcomes these preliminary steps for their importance in identifying the basic responsibility for the current international environmental crisis, and emphasizes the need to:

1. Increase the available financing to these funds through permanent and renewable resources.

2. Use the funds in providing assistance to developing countries in the form of unredeemable grants to help them prepare their plans for environment preservation, conduct of studies on the environmental implications of development projects, and establish national data base on the environment.

3. Allocate the remaining funds to finance the implementation of projects, in the form of concessional loans, giving priority to the projects ready for implementation.

XIII. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND DEGRADATION

Formulating appropriate legal and legislative formulas to deal with the environmental damage or deterioration caused to third countries.